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THE BIT O' WRITIN'.

THE

BIT O' WRITIN'

AND

OTHER TALES.

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE BIT O' WRITIN'.

CHAPTER I.

On a fine morning in the month of May, Murty Meehan was occupied "threnching his little peeaties." By the term "little" applied to them, Murty did not by any means wish to convey the idea that his growing staple crop was confined to a small space; for in truth the sloping potato-ridges occupied a goodly portion of the hill-side upon which they were planted; nor any apprehension that they must prove of diminutive size, owing either to his choice of seed or to an unfavourable season, or to any other

cause which the uninitiated can easily imagine. His "little pee-aties" he, however, called them, signifying thereby, (and his neighbours so understood the adjective,) first, that they were his—his own; second, that, even in embryo, he bore them a particular affection.

The French people would understand the term, in the double sense mentioned, better than the English; for among them, as we all know, *ma petite dame*, or *mon petit papa*, or *mon petit* almost anything, expresses, indifferently, simply that the object alluded to is theirs, and is little, or that it is an object of tenderness, or of interest, at least, be it little or not. But to a portion of the rather unfigurative community, for whose edification we write, it seems incumbent on us to explain why Murty Meehan applied to his fine sprouting plat of potatoes the epithet "little."

By Murty's reasoning, then, they were little; and yet almost everything to him. They were dear to Murty—dearly loved; and therefore

little. They had cost him, and were costing him, considerable trouble; and, until piled up at home, or in a pit in their own soil, to protect them against the frost, would cost him a good deal more; and therefore he owed them a paternal regard. Under Providence they were to prove, for many a month after gaining maturity, the staple dish of his family, himself, and his "slip of a pig;" ay, for the whole coming year they were to stand him and his human dependents in lieu of beef, of mutton, of lamb, of veal, of venison, and of turtle; and hence they were his very, very "little pee-aties." And just as "little," in Murty's eyes, or according to his vocabulary, were his "little wife," (a strapping, though a simple dame,) his "little daughter," (a full-grown woman,) and his "little cow," and his "little horse," though neither animal shamed the standard proportions of its species.

Using, therefore, the term in the fond meaning infused into it by Murty Meehan, we repeat, that on a fine morning in May he was em-

ployed "threnching his little pee-aties:" and again we beg a word of explanation, necessary, perhaps, with some persons, to say that the operation alluded to consisted in digging between the potato-ridges, in the interstices which separated them, and throwing the fresh earth among the growing plants.

His position, as has been intimated, was on a hill-side. This hill-side sloped down to the banks of a little rivulet, covered with the freshest green grass, among which grew a profusion of wild flowers, and Murty's cabin stood within view and sound of the rippling water. Across the stream the ground again rose high, and was mostly wooded; so that our friend resided in a solitary and peculiarly beautiful little valley, owing to the curvings of which, on both sides of the stream, and upward and downward with its arbitrary course, no other dwelling could be observed from his and our point of view. A pleasing impression of lonesomeness without desolation was therefore conveyed to

the mind by the simple scene; and something of the same kind might have been its attractions to the unusual numbers of small singing birds which frequented it—to the linnet, the chaffinch, the robin, the thrush, the blackbird, —to all of them, in fact, not omitting even the chirping, flirting wren, who were made by Providence to pipe or twitter a single note of joy or of contentment.

So Murty Meehan's "little cabin" is situated amid features of much natural beauty, aided and heightened by cultivation; and in this case his favourite and generally-bestowed epithet came true in every sense; for "little" indeed was his mud edifice; so little, that some surprise might be expressed as to how he managed to get in or out of its doorway, or even to stand upright under its straw roof—for Murty was a man of no common stature. Having been his own architect, as well as chief workman, one might, at all events, safely assert that, in constructing it, he had not studiously calculated either his

natural height or his personal convenience. But no matter. Such instances of disproportion between the miserable houses of his countrymen, and even their own bones and muscles, to say nothing of the bounty and loveliness of nature all around them, were and are sufficiently numerous to remove from Murty's architectural practices, according to his means, any thing like a charge of waywardness or singularity.

So Murty "threnched" away, the birds we have spoken of singing loudly to him, and he, as if by mere loudness he would make them admit themselves over-matched in melody, bawling out,—in tones to which the sweet little hollow rang again, though they did not scare the rival singers, because they knew he was only expressing, like themselves, his ecstatic sense of existence, in his own fashion,—the song which has the frequent chorus of

"Cuishla-ma-chree, did you not see
What, the rogue, he done to me?

Broke my pitcher, and spilt my wather,
Kissed my wife, and married my daughter!
Cuishla-ma-chree!"

To observe Murty Meehan at his task, the looker-on might, with some slight assistance from imagination, gain a tolerably accurate notion of the lusty ease and dexterity with which Hercules must have performed his labours; and indeed, were our amateur a statuary, he need not have searched farther for a model from which to chisel a god of strength. In Murty's person were combined accurate symmetry of parts with almost gigantic proportions; he stood to the full height of six feet four inches. His face, though not a very intellectual one, was comely, honest, and well-meaning; but, for reasons to be mentioned, we ought, perhaps, to limit to one or two days in the week, all opportunity for deciding either on its character, or its claims to be considered handsome or ugly. In fact, upon one day alone, out of the seven, he got shaved, and this was Sunday. The next,

his beard began to sprout again, and, even so soon, some change was thereby induced over his physiognomy. By noon on the Tuesday it, or, as he styled it, "the afther grass," gained a goodly growth; and thenceforward, day by day, till shaving-day came round in course, so disguised was his face by the great crop of black bristles surrounding it, that it would be very difficult to decipher its cast, hue, or general effect: light blue eyes hinting, indeed, good-nature, with spots of wholesome red just under them, about half a nose, and a forehead above it, being the only glimpses of feature distinguishable amid the luxuriant "afther-grass."

Notwithstanding all his natural qualifications, so far as person went, for bullying his way through the world, and notwithstanding also, the proverbial pugnacity of his countrymen of every stature, Murty Meehan was a quiet, easy man, using his rare strength chiefly for the right lawful purpose of executing, in full ratio with his superior capacity for such a task,

a portion of field labour. But if he otherwise made no display of himself, his neighbours boasted of him; and the district in which he resided was called, far and near, Murty Meehan's parish, as if the honour of having given birth to him entitled it to that distinguishing appellation. We must explain.

Although never known to have quarrelled with any human being, and seldom proposing, himself, a trial of strength with a neighbour, in a friendly way, Murty, without his knowledge, was often staked by his admirers against all comers; and then, for the honour of the parish, he would quietly submit to be led forth against his ambitious challengers, and with invariable and immeasurable success, he exhibited his hidden might in tossing a stone, almost a rock, or in flinging a sledge-hammer, or in performing, beyond chance of competition, any other of the various rustic feats, in the doing of which massive force is the only qualification for excellence. And on the occasions of his pro-

ceeding to the place of trial, he might be seen surrounded by the young and the old, the boys, the girls, and the aged men and women of his little lonesome valley and its vicinity, towering above them all, and—without our meaning a threadbare pun—looking down on his escort with all the simple good-nature of his character, and smiling on their enthusiasm, just as any other assured great man might at that of his humble adherents.

But we are not going to exhibit Murty Meehan in his most distinguished and famous light. Upon a matter widely different from his prowess either in the labouring field or in the arena of manly contention, it is our present duty to record the achievements of this redoubtable personage; and readers may choose to form their own notions of the manner in which he acquitted himself of the business in hand; one thing is however certain, namely, that it proved to honest Murty himself a task much more difficult than if he had engaged to toss a metal

weight of one hundred pounds over the roof of his own house.

Before entering further into the affair, a few lines must be devoted to a sketch of the individual at whose instance, and for whose advantage, he undertook this serious matter.

The man in question, for reasons to be gradually given, generally went by the name of "the ould Admiral." Standing at Murty Meehan's side, he appeared to no advantage in point of stature; and yet, pigmy he was not, unless a person of nearly six feet high deserves that epithet. His air, regards, and carriage were bluff—bluff almost to a challenge to box with you. A cicatrized gash, commencing under his left eye, traversing his nose, and terminating at the right corner of his mouth, diagonally severed his face into two tolerably equal portions, of which one-half of the nose belonged, or seemed to belong, to the upper, and the other half to the lower region of his physiognomy; and this division of property, of identity,

indeed, rested, according to his own account, on grounds other than that suggested merely by the line of demarcation.

It occurred, he asserted, on "boord the ould Vincint," during the American war; and his story of the transaction, among all the stories he told of his battles, victories, and dreadful escapes from death—which were topics of standing wonder to his friend, Murty Meehan, as well as the whole neighbourhood—was not the least surprising. The crew of the Vincent were in the act of boarding an enemy's ship. Terence O'Brien—our hero's name—figured away, of course, in the thick of the *mêlée*—a slash from an opponent's hanger—"a curse-o'-Crowmul, French loober, he was,"—conferred the whole gash in question—into the channel of which "he could run his five fingers, as if taking soundings"—and at the same time "whipped away, clane an' clever from her irons, more than the biggest half of his ruddher." Well—what of that? it was not till the action

ceased, and the Frenchman had been made a prize of, and Terence about to put in a rightful claim for some half-and-half grog, that he ascertained his loss; and "a thrifle grieved" he felt to be sure, when he first brought to mind, at the moment, what an appearance he must make in future, "with hardly the half of his ruddher to his stern-quarters," when——

"Terry O'Brien a-hoy! would you know this, I say?" sung out to him his shipmate and fellow-countryman, Tom Ryan, holding up to view what seemed to Terence indubitably the lopped portion of his nose. He was in a great hurry, doubtless, at the time, and did not take particular notice, but Tom Ryan assured him it was a slice of his own features he beheld; and so, to the cock-pit they made their way together, with it, and the surgeon stitched it on, as well as he could—and—

"May my ould hulk of a sowl never float aloft," continued Terence, "if I do not tell the blessed thruth; it wasn't the rest o' my own

natural nose he fixed on, at all—and that cat-head pet, Tom Ryan, knew the same from the biginin—(my heavy curse on his tack, wherever he is!)—but a bit of a d——d to-the-divvle French loober's snout, that Tom picked off deck, from among other odds and ends, afther the scrimmage, an' that never belonged to myself;" and that was the reason why, to the present day, the whole nose on his face, such as it was, never seemed of a piece—"and no blame to the surgeon, by any manes—for may I sink fifty fathoms deep, but he was as clever a hand as ever spliced a timber; didn't I see him, wid my own eyes, saw off the right mast from my hulk, while I could shout out 'grog,' and no more about it, only throw it for a tit-bit to the sharks? An'—my ould bones to ould Davy—only he *did* get through the nose job so well, but I'd haul down the *parly's* bit o' bad flesh agin, an' throw it into the sey, to pison the hungriest fish that ever swum."

There were some obvious collateral proofs of

the truth of Terence O'Brien's biography of his nose, to which he did not fail to allude. "He spoke through his nose," as the saying goes; "and didn't all the parblues do the same, like so many pigs o' the divvle?" Again —it was well known that from his cradle up to the day of the accident, he had boasted a long hook-backed nose—but what was it like now? the upper half of it, which had always been on his face, might do well enough, to be sure, and, indeed, gave promise of the beginning of such a conformation as that mentioned; but only look at the lower half—the Frenchman's half of it! "cocked up towards his forehead, like the chaplain's eye, that had a squint in it, towards the sky-rakers, when he sung out prayers, of a Sunday."

During his term of sea-service, Terence O'Brien had unconsciously contracted some characteristics, which rendered him a puzzle to his present neighbours, and, indeed, a contradiction to himself—or, at least, to Terence

O'Brien that then was, and Terence O'Brien that used to be, once upon a time. For instance: in his more youthful days, he had engaged in some one of those many rustic combinations for which the Irish peasantry are celebrated, and which can best be accounted for by considering that their wants make them discontented, and the injuries that often produce those wants reckless of all consequences, when their object is vengeance on the nearest palpable aggressor. Terence and his associates violated the law of the land; rewards for their apprehension were offered; some of them were discovered, tried, and hanged; and he himself, to avoid the fate that seemed to await him, absconded from his native place, "and never cried stop, nor let the grass grow under his feet," till he had arrived in "Cork's own town," distant about one hundred miles (Irish) from his starting-post. There, scarce yet pausing to take breath, he entered on board a man-of-war, as his most secure hiding-place; and

thus, the wild Irishman, who, but a few hours before, had been denounced as almost a traitor to the state, became one of its sworn defenders: —ay, and in a very short time, if not at that very moment, one of its most loyal and sincere defenders. And this character grew upon him, and in it, fully confirmed, he returned home after a long absence, in peaceful and oblivious times, much to the non-edification of his stationary neighbours, as has been intimated.

Further. As a White-boy, before going on his travels, Terence had mortally hated England, England's king, and the very name of everything English; and, in the same ratio, had loved England's foes, of all denominations —the French, her "natural enemies," as they have been somewhat strangely called, above all others. But none of these youthful prejudices did Terence bring home with him. "Long life, and a long reign to King George!" was now his shout, while the hairs on his head

bristled in enmity against "parly-woos;" and good reason why, for both sentiments—sensations rather. During half his amphibious existence, Terence's grog had been sweetened by pouring it down his throat, among his ship-comrades, with a grateful mention of the name of his Britannic majesty, and Terence's only thoughts and efforts constantly directed towards the discomfiture of the ill-wishers of that august personage; besides, the loss of his arm, and of half his nose, with the disgraceful substitution of that half by the half of a Frenchman's "snub," gave him personal cause to detest the Gallic race; so that he might be said to loathe them all in the marrow of his bones—yea, even of those portions of his bones which had been severed from his body, and cast to the sharks.

And some other exotic peculiarities Terence also transplanted to his native valley. His language seemed, among his old playfellows, absolutely a new dialect—and so, indeed, it

was. Grafted on his ancient brogue, which had never quite slipt off his tongue, sea-terms and sea-phrases, and, above all, sea-oaths and imprecations, luxuriantly sprouted out: and the former would make his auditors laugh themselves into fits, while the latter astounded or shocked them. We must in truth admit that, in the use of those unnatural profanations of speech, Terence was indeed too lavish: with some one—if not two—of them he always began a sentence, and they served him, rhetorically, as conjunctions, copulative and disjunctive, and sometimes to point his periods.

His parish priest, a man of some humour, as well as of sincere zeal in his vocation—and every parish priest of an Irish congregation, at least of a rustic one, ought to have a spice of humour in him—was fond of listening to Terence OBrien's accounts of his battles, and other adventures. He it was who had laughingly dubbed Terence "the ould admiral;" though the title was unhesitatingly and gravely

accepted and retained, as well by the veteran, as by most of his present friends and associates. But the good priest felt it his duty to take Terence to task on the head of his outlandish cursing, swearing, and imprecating; and the sinner acknowledged his offences, and promised to give them up; yet, at the very next encounter between him and his spiritual director, did he salute the chaplain with a good merman oath, at the beginning, and in the middle, and at the end of the well-meant greeting.

His clergyman, still in pursuance of his sense of duty, then prevailed on Terence, after much salutary stratagem, to attend the confessional. And again the penitent was so far amenable, and did "attend with the rest of the crew;" principally because he understood the "*station* of confession" to be a kind of "muster of all hands on deck." But the zealous priest soon began to feel hopeless of a real reformation in the nominal convert. Even while at his clergyman's knee, Terence would confess his very

transgressions against piety of language with new and awful oaths in confirmation of the truth of his self-accusations; and while acknowledging other sins, of a different and perhaps a still more heinous character, he would, as his energy arose with his vivid recollections, still swear, through thick and thin, to his own great condemnation, so that the priest was obliged to make a drawn battle of the matter; his conscience not warranting him to permit the irreclaimed and irreclaimable Terence to approach the sacrament; and his feelings of comfort much augmented by the declaration, on Terence's part, that "—— to his ould soul, if he would boord him any longer!"

He had been kept so long coming and going, he averred, "now on this tack, now on that, an' still no sey-room made, but all on the same 'station,' the —— loober of a chaplain never bringing him to close action—one time with the wind, the next moment breeze right a-head—that the ablest seyman in the sarvice could

make no port, and have sich a steerage; and his hulk to ould Davy! but he would hoist sail, an', for the rest o' the voyage, steer in the ould thrack; aye,"—(another tremendous oath)—"if he didn't, might ould ship never weather another gale!" And so hoist sail he did, and "scudded afore the wind, steering his ould hulk by the ould compass, an' laving the rest o' the looberly crew to the looberly chaplain;" that is, he continued to curse and swear away right and left; although in other respects, Terence could not be called a very wicked sinner.

CHAPTER II.

Such, at all events, was truly the man who now accosted Murty Meehan on the potato-covered hill-side of their native glen.

So intent upon his work, as well as upon his marvellous song of "*Cuishla-ma-chree*," had Murty been, that the deafening sound of Terence's voice, very near to him, was the first intimation he received of the presence of his esteemed neighbour.

"Ould ship a-hoy!" shouted the ould admiral, bellowing through his truncated fist, by way of speaking-trumpet, almost into the tympanum, as we have intimated, of Murty Mee-

han's ear. So sudden, indeed, so proximate, and withal so tempestuous and squally was the vociferation, that a man of less tension of nerve than that possessed by our honest friend, might, without much censure to his presence of mind, have lawfully started and quaked at it. Murty only turned quietly round, however, pushed his old hat up from his eyes, and smiled good-humouredly, as he answered the hail.

"Hah! then, musha, God save you, admiral."

"What cheer, lad, what cheer?"

"What cheer, a bouchal, is id? English that to me, if there's no iffence."

"What cheer, I say, what cheer?"

"Well, I must thry to English id, myself, I suppose. It's all as one, I'm thinkin', as if a counthry *spalpeen*, like myself, 'ud say—'How is your four bones, Murty?'"

"All the same lingo, shipmit."

"Why, thin, I'm brave and hearty, admiral, as is asy to be seen, by lookin' at me. I give thanks to you for axin."

"A fair breeze in your sheets every day you turn up, my hearty."

"An', success purshu *you*, is what *I* say, ould admiral, aroon."

"I've steered a-head to your station, shipmit, to ax your sarvice on a conthrary little matther, d'you see me."

"Och, then, admiral, isn't id yourself knows well I'd go a sthart or two, any day, from my road, to do a turn for you. An' not mooch noise I'd make about that same."

"An' for that rason, an' becase I knows id well, d'you see me, I'm now alongside o' you, my hearty. In the days when I was nothin' but a bit of a loblolly boy ——"

"A loblolly boy! an' what quare sort iv a boy is that, admiral?"

"A gorsoon, a gorsoon, as they used to call me here in Muckalee."

"Aye; now I'm on your manin', I think. A gorsoon is a gorsoon, in the counthry; but whin

he goes to sey, it's a loblolly boy they calls him, admiral?"

"Ay, ay. Well, shipmit, whin I was a gorsoon at home, here, d'you know, the schoolmasther could'nt by no manes cut the larnin' into my lanthron? though it's often an' often he thried id, at the cat-head, the old Muckalee loober!"

"At the cat's head? Why, thin, that was a curious thing for him to do; I never heered of a schoolmasther havin' that fashion afore, admiral, honey; stop; wait; och, but maybe I have you now; maybe it's wid the cat's-tail he thried you? You know the breed o' cats that does the scratchin' at the loblolly boys at school, admiral?"

"All much the same, jolly lad; all much the same; cat, head or tail; aye, many's the day he lent me the rope's end, as if 'twas the mainmast he was layin' it on—to ould Davy wid his hulk, to scuttle it well, for the same!" (We

have, during our report of this conversation, sunk some of Terence's oaths and imprecations, and it is our intention to do so in future.) "An', little doubt, shipmit, but he *is* undher hatches long ago; an' if ever I happen to steer on that tack," continued Terence, getting animated, and flourishing his one arm, as if it were giving a preparatory shake to the rope's-end, "if ever I steer on that tack—an' when I see him lashed up, getting his own round dozens —as surely will be the case—if I don't sing out, 'Lay on, ould Davy! lay on, my jolly lad!' if I don't, Murty, may —— shiver my timbers to a parfact sheer wreck, Murty! aye' or maybe I'd take on to the reckonin' myself, shipmit, an' pay him back on his —— looberly stern-quarters, some o' the ould score wid my own hand!"

"Bee the gonnies! an' only right," grinned Murty through his "afther-grass," highly amused with the time, place, and circumstances of the admiral's threatened vengeance.

"A broadside to my sowl in glory, if I don't then! But, Murty, my hearty, as I was a sayin', I never could pick up as much o' the larnin' as 'ud help me to box the littlest bit iv a compass that ever swum: an' for that same rason I was only fit to do the work of an able-bodied seyman, all the blessed days of my sey-life, aboord the ould ship, d'you see me: how-somever, Murty, when the decks were cleared for action, an' the guns roarin', and the sey-wather was bilin' hot, you'd think, round about 'em, I could stand bee my own gun, or jump aboord a —— jabberin' French inimy wid my pike or my hanger in my hand, well enough: ay, shipmit, I'd do that for the honour an' glory of ould King George, an' ould Ireland, an' Saint Pathrick, into the bargain, as well as ever a Johnny-Raw Englishman that ever reefed a sail, Murty! Them Englishers is bowld enough, to be sure, but they're not fit to stand bee the side iv an Irish seyman, for all that; the fightin', Murty, comes more naatril to us;

by land or by wather, it's all the same, the one as welcome as the other."

"Why, we're handy at it, somehow, I believe' beyant all doubt, admiral."

"Well, again, Murty: as I tould you, twice over, I never could come at the larnin', my jolly boy; but no matther now; it's all one, whin the ould ship's a hulk. Only this, Murty Meehan; I'm informed as how there's a power o' prize money sarvin' out to the ould crew o' the ould Vincint, or to as many o' them as is over sey-wather, anyhow, wherever they be's to be found; an' I come to you on the head iv id, 'cause I hear, for sart'n sure, you're a good scholard."

"Musha, I'm thankful to the neighbours for their good word, admiral," said Murty, blushing, if the occurrence could only have been seen through his crop of black beard and whiskers, at this acknowledgment of his literary superiority; "but, surely, you could get as good a hand as ever I was among your own people.

avich; there's the born brether o' you, to say nothin' iv his son, your own namesake——"

"Avast now, shipmit!" interrupted Terence, gruffly and stentoriously; "hah! the ould reg'lar seyman isn't goin' to hoist signal for smugglers and pirates to come aboord; the born brether o' me! no, no, nor that bit iv a cock-boat he has in tow, his son, either; what! when I cum back, only to give him a hail, afther my last cruise, didn't the —— land-loober tell me to sheer off, an' say I had no call to a berth in my own ould ship, now that the ould commodore, the father iv us, had slipped cable? An' aint I ever since, here, in Muckalee station, scuddin' from port to port, not able to ride at anchor among the whole squadhron o' ye? An' now, whin the shinars is to be put into the locker, am I to sing out to him to help me to keep the kay? or ax him for any help at all that might let him into the sacret, or give him a right to jaw for share? No, no, I say again; —— to my ould timbers! if ever he sees a

yallow boy o' mine; you're the man, Murty, an' you only, that must turn out for this musther; an' what I have to ax o' you is to write down wid your pin, what we used to call a memorandle o' service."

"Why thin," replied Murty, "that's not so mooch to talk about, that we'd say no to you, for a one ould admiral; an' so, we'll do it for you;" and Murty "elevated his figure to its full height,"—(we are loth to show our ignoance of some of the established cut-and-dry phraseology of novel writing,)—again silently triumphing in the testimony borne to his scholarship, and at the distinguished light in which it placed him.

"Here, then,—yee-o-ho! heave away, my hearty! yee-ho!" piped the admiral, passing his single arm through one of Murty's and lugging him down the hill side. And Murty, sticking his shovel in the soil, readily allowed Terence O'Brien to hurry him still

downward, toward his cabin; his features wearing a serious cast, and indeed his whole mind bent upon the important task of clerkship which he had undertaken.

CHAPTER III.

After nearly doubling himself in order to enter the door-way of his dwelling, and when he had stood (almost) erect again, in the middle of its clay floor, Murty addressed his wife.

"Chevaun, aroon, where's the poor garsoon's bit iv an ink-horun, I wondher?"

"What cheer, vanithee, what cheer?" demanded the ould admiral, in the same breath, as he kindly, though rather smartly, slapped the good woman between the shoulders.

"Why, thin, brave an' hearty, admiral honey," answered the housewifely Chevaun;

"and here's the ink-horun, Murty a-cuishla; musha, my heavy hathred on id, for one ink-horun!"

"An' why so, Chevaun?" asked Murty.

"Why! I'm as sart'n sure as that I spake the word, that Paudeen put more o' the ink iv id on the Sunday *shanavast*,* than he did on the copy-book, Murty."

"Bee gonnies! an' likely enough sich a thing 'ud happen," assented her husband. "I remember the first time I was put upon larnin' the pin-writin' myself, admiral; an' sure its nothin' ud sarve my turn, in thim days, but I must go an' scoop out amost all the ink in the horun, an' put id all over my clothes, on every spot where id could be obsarved—aye, an' my two fists ud have the colour iv a blackymoor's paws; an', bee this pin in my hand! I done id for no rason in the world, only to let the neighbours see, whin they'd meet me comin' home from the school, of an evenin' or a

* Waistcoat.

mornin', that I was makin' use o' the pin, wid the masther himself; 'twas by way o' braggin' o' myself, afther a manner, admiral."

"Aha!" replied the admiral, "well for you that you hadn't my ould commodore, Fitzgibbon, to pipe you on deck, shipmit, on the head o' that same; the ould loober, wid his ould three-decker of a flax wig, that commanded over our crew whin I was at the schoolin'; split my mainsail to tatthers! if he wouldn't have you up to the cat-head for wastin' the ship's tar; sink my ould hulk to ould Davy, if he wouldn't."

"Arrah, then, admiral aroon," inquired Mrs. Meehan, "who's that same ould Davy you're always sinkin' your hulk to, afther sich an unnaatural fashion? I'm tould it's your own self you call bee the name iv a hulk; an' sure it's a quare name for a christhen to be puttin' on his body, that has a sowl to be saved, tied to id; but who is this one ould Davy, I'd be thankful to know?"

"Who is he? blow us all up, sky-high, if I very well know myself, misthress;" and he paused to examine, with a knotted brow and a gruff, puzzled face, a question which he had never before taken into consideration.

"It's like enough, misthress, he's some kind of a *duoul*,"* he resumed, after a pause: "ay, ay; he must be a duoul, I'm thinkin'; I hard 'em aboard, jawin' about his cloven foot, an' duouls have sich timbers; yes, an' he hauls away at the parley-woos whin they foundher in action; an' when we used to be givin' 'em a broadside, we had a fashion o' sayin', send the d——d loobers to ould Davy! Ay, ay:" he paused again to recapitulate in his mind those weighty reasons for investing with a certain character the personage in question—the Jupiter or Pluto, as it might be, of his marine mythology. Then Terence continued, "Ay, misthress, I b'lieve he's all as one at sey, as what ye call your *duoul*, here on land;

* Devil.

though this isn't quite clear to me, neither: becase, d'ye see me, ould Davy has *his* berth at the bottom o' the sey, that's sert'n sure; an' your *duoul* is undher hatches—down here, undher ground; but they're close related—aye, aye, the one is born-brother to the other chap, no doubt iv id; an' he bears a hand wid sailors, as your *duoul* does wid your landsmen; wid this differ, that he takes all foundered sowls as belongs to him in the jolly-boat, or in a barge, or in a pinnace, accordin' to the rank o' thim aboord;—yes, misthress, he's our sey-divvle, nothin' less—my hulk to ould Davy, but he is!"

"The Lord purtect us from him, and from all his sort, bee sey an' land, now an' for iver, amin!" ejaculated the attentive Chevaun Meehan, crossing her forehead.

"Bee the gonnies! as Chevaun says," remarked her husband; "goodness save us from his two paws! but, if a body got his pick an' choose o' the both, I believe it would be

betther, as the man said to his wife—(I mane neither myself nor you, Chevaun,)—it would be betther keep the *duoul* we know, than the *duoul* we don't know, admiral honey; though wid good help, we won't be throublesome to ather the one or the other o' thim, plaise God."

"Musha, an' gracious forbid, Murty agra," piously assented Chevaun.

"That's not my way o' thinkin' teetotally, shipmit," dissented the admiral, gruffly; "for whinever I'm bound for the other world, if 'tis a thing I must steer for any sich d——d port of id, d'ye see me——"

"Ye may call the port bee that name, sure enough, admiral, an' no sin on you for cursin', this time, anyhow," interrupted Murty.

"D——d or no d——d, shipmit," now bellowed Terence, becoming vehement; "ould Davy's jolly-boat for me, far beyant any way o' goin' by land, undher your land-*duouls*' colours; your landsmen are all sharks, as I heered

from my cradle up, and your land *duouls* goes by the same fashion of course; so none o' the d——d horned loobers for my money, but ould Davy for ever—hurrah!"

"Well, all the harum I wish you, poor ould admiral, is, that you may keep clear o' the ugly place—you know yourself where I mane—by land or wather; to go in a boat might be the most *cooramuch** way, no doubt; only, for our three selves, an' them we wish well to, into the bargain, we'd rather not to be on the voyage, at all at all."

"It's a bad sarvice, afther all, shipmit," half agreed Terence, beginning to be cooled by his friend's moral reflections; "but hurrah, shipmit! an' ould able-bodied-seyman that does his duty is never clapped undher hatches, foundher as he may, or whenever or wherever he may; no, he goes aloft, my hearty—'tis as naat'ral for him as to ship his grog; an',

* Snug.

barrin' ould Davy's press-gang claps me aboord, an' thin scuds off wid me, all canvass crowded, never will I take on wid him or his crew; for, d'ye see me, Murty, when once a man is nabbed by the press-gang, an' lugged 'boord ship, he must stick to his gun, bee course, or be tried for mutiny in the sarvice: so, if ould Davy 'lists me that way, I must stand before the mast, and make the cruise: but if ever I boord him by my own free will, may I be d——d for it, neighbour."

"An' you needn't pray the prayer at all, admiral," smiled the facetious Murty; "but I wondher what sort iv a pin for the writin' is this," putting on a face of much business, approaching the door-way, holding the pen between him and the light, and with much knowing scrutiny examining it. Then he tried its nib on his nail.

"Looks as if it had seen sarvice," remarked Terence; "but all the betther for that, may be,

shipmit; a seyman is never the worse, getting into fresh action, for havin' been in two or three scrimmages afore."

"Sarvice or no sarvice, as regards the pin," pursued Murty, "it's so long since my own self thried my hand at the writin' business, that I don't well know how it will turn out, in the long run, neighbour."

These words of modest doubt were accompanied, however, by a smile of self-sufficient confidence.

"But here goes, in God's name, anyhow, to venthre our loock, the best way we can;" and while he leisurely pulled the cross-legged table to the door, Murty continued to speak in assured good-humour.

"When I was in the habit o' goin' to the school, admiral, the masther usen't to be over-an-above ashamed o' the scholard—though it's mysef says the same, that oughtn't to say id, admiral agra."

"No doubt iv it—no doubt; aboord o' the

ould Vincint, it's purser's mate they'd make o' you, long ago, to a sart'nty," flattered the admiral, willing to keep Murty in good humour, that he might get his own business the better done; not indeed, that he in the least doubted the scholarly qualifications of his chosen private secretary.

"Maybe its jest as well wid me, as it is, admiral; who's wise enough to say but, that if we were a sailor, all this time, from the schoolin' up, we'd have a bit iv a Frenchman's snout upon our poor face, instid iv our own naath'ral nose, this blessed day?

"Ay, like enough — every mother's sowl's hulk o' them to ould Davy!" assented the admiral, reddening with anger; and thereupon he gave his own nose—or what served him as his own, or, at least as half of his own—such a pull that had not the surgeon of the Vincent done his office well, Terence must have torn it from its usurped position.

"But we had betther go to our work at

onct," resumed Murty; and he fell to scraping, with more strength than skill, at the inside of his little son's ink-horn.

"Musha, I wondher what *meeaw** is on id this turn, for ink?"

The ink which the amanuensis essayed to get into his pen had been produced by the squeezing together of alder-berries. To prevent it spilling out of the horn, which hung by a leathern strap from a button of Paudeen's jacket, as he trudged to school, the primitive little vessel had been half filled with old linen, scraped almost into lint; into this pulpy substance the liquid became absorbed; and it required a certain schoolboy knack, acquired by long practice, and many failures, thence to press and scoop it into the funnel of the quill.

After sundry awkward attempts, Murty Meehan succeeded in charging his pen, brimful, and began to stir his fingers, wrist, and even arm, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Och!

* Ill luck.

tundher—tundher an' ages! an' sure we forget oursefs, intirely—where is the paper, admiral? Here was mysef goin' to set about writin', widout the paper—an' that's a thing the schoolmasther, his own four bones, couldn't do, I believe."

"May my hulk go floatin' to ould Davy!" began Terence O'Brien.

"Musha, admiral, 'tis a schandle for you, an' a great sin, to be goin' on that-a-way, wid your ould Davy, and your strange curses," remonstrated Chevaun; "loock or grace can niver come of id to the writin'."

"I desarve your word, misthress—I desarve id, but won't agin, this long time." Terence felt selfishly penitent; "but here's the paper, shipmit; I had it in the locker all the while;" it had been fast buttoned under his jacket—he now presented it.

"An' see how it would'nt spake out for idsef," remarked Murty, with a condescending smile, such as any man of parts might

vouchsafe to those who admitted his possession of them, and whom he was about to amaze with a proof of their excellence. And while thus smiling on the undisguisedly ignorant admiral, Murty proceeded to smoothen down, as he honestly believed, the paper, which had become much crumpled in the admiral's locker, and therefore seemed to require some such adjustment: but, in reality, Murty's hard, raspish hands only produced a rough, fuzzy surface on the sheet which was intended to bear the impress of his scholarship. It was at length properly set before him, and he again succeeded in filling the tube of his pen to the utmost it could hold.

"Now, admiral, what's the writin' to be about?" he demanded, approaching the pen to that point of the paper whence he intended to set forth upon his voyage of discovery through the dimly-apprehended ocean of letters—when lo, the overcharged instrument immediately voided its contents on the paper, and they flowed over it in a little sable current.

"Shipped a sey," commented the admiral, gravely and imperturbably.

"Spilt-milk, bee the soukins," said Chevaun, with wife-like sorrow and sympathy.

"The divvil welcome id, I say," lamented the penman; "couldn't id stay quietly where it came from? but wait a bit," winking on the sailor, and resuming his self-assured smiles; "we had a way in the school, long ago, to get over a misfort'n like that; and I'll bet you anything but you'll see I don't forget it, this blessed day;" and—(shudder civilized reader!)—Murty protruded nothing less than his long tongue, and with it began to sponge out the rivulet of alderberry ink.

With much relish for the experiment, the admiral sedately looked on, and "That's what we call swabbin' decks, shipmit," he observed; "an' the very thing to do afther shippin' a sey, sure enough, barrin' it's a heavy sey intirely, an' thin the word's 'bale out,' afore swabbin', d'ye see me?" He paused, still evidently

pleased with the dexterity of the operation, which Murty continued, with his winks and smiles of promised success.

But Murty was not quite triumphant over this obstacle to his penmanship. His first efforts only spread the ink, in rather a lighter shade indeed, over a much larger surface than it had previously occupied; a necessity thus arose for extending and persevering in the process of extraction; and when, at length, the paper was, at least in his estimation, and in that of his friend and his wife, pretty free from positive stain, its whole superficies had become thoroughly damp. But this latter circumstance did not occur to Murty nor to his observers.

"Now, at any rate, for the writin'," he said, again scooping out his "tint o' ink;" and, lest it should serve him the trick it had before done, he cautiously held the pen level till he had stolen it round his back, and then, with a calculating jerk, Murty tried to get rid of the superfluous quantity of ink it held.

"Murther!" screamed his wife, Chevaun, suddenly slapping her left eye with her right hand; "murther, Murty, murther! it's now you done the *dhunnus** intirely!"

The alder-berry juice had lodged full in the handsome, though too inquisitive eye of Chevaun; and the good dame was in that state of health in which, according to a quotation that has often administered to *the squeamish* in other writers, as well as ourselves—

"Ladies love to be who love their lords;"

and her words of alarm expressed a fear, and so Murty well knew, though their meaning was not fully expressed, that "the young Christhin," who, by this time, was far on his road into the world, would make his appearance among us with, upon his cheek, such a black tear as now welled down that of his mother.

Murty was at her side in a moment, anxious to reassure her, though almost as much alarmed as

* Mischief.

herself. "No, no, *ma chree*," he cried, in his tenderest accents; "no harum can come iv id —— there now."

We are almost ashamed, this time, to crave pardon of, or otherwise to conciliate, the refined patron of our humble studies from nature: but we must indicate the shocking fact, that the anxious and loving husband did use to his wife's cheek the very same horrid sponge which he had with so much felicity just before applied to the stained paper; and when he conceived that, as in the former initiating case, success had crowned his efforts, Murty kissed the sufferer.

"Cleared out for action at last, or my hulk to ould Davy!" said the patient, never-doubting admiral, who had observantly regarded this second piece of cleverness on Murty's part, with the same profound interest bestowed on the first.

"Ay, by *gonnus!* now or nivir, as the ould sayin' goes, admiral *a hager*."

Once more the amanuensis sat, right in the door-way, to his cross-legged table, and once more, with increased sedateness, disposed himself to his task. Murty was now a wiser, because a more experienced man. Previous failure and mishap had taught him extreme caution. After a third time imparting ink to his pen, he carefully examined it, in order to ascertain whether or no it contained the necessary measure of liquid, and no more. In properly fixing it between his two fingers and thumb, he spent a reasonable portion of time, and, in the eyes of his neighbour and spouse, evinced much ingenuity: the operation being effected by seizing the top, or feathery part of the quill, with the fingers of his left hand, and, by their aid, drawing it upward and downward, and twisting and turning it, till it was poised to his satisfaction; and still, by the joint agency of both hands, Murty guided it to the paper.

"Choice steerage, my hearty," said the ever-watchful admiral, with glee.

"Nately done, of a sart'nty," agreed Chevaun.

All seemed, indeed, most happily ready. The pen took dead aim at the place on the sheet which it was first to hit; the scribe's mouth screwed itself up; his eyes intently fixed on the paper, and his head twisted round towards his left shoulder, where stood the admiral, awaiting the breath of that personage to be discharged of his full-crammed intentions; a double-loaded musket, at full cock, levelled at a target, and only wanting a touch on its trigger, to let it off, would convey an idea of Murty at this big moment. Having waited a second or two—"Now, admiral, say out, and don't be afeard, what we're to put down," he said, solemnly.

"We had a fashion o' callin' this sort o' writin' a memorandle o' sarvice—put down that, first," said his employer; but suddenly interrupting himself, he sang out shrilly, "No, no; avast there—no, not yet, shipmit; afore any

other thing, d'ye see me, put down the time o' the watch."

"The time o' the watch, avich? Musha, niver a one in the poor house; nor a clock neither, as you know well yourself; but couldn't we guess the hour o' the day it is by the sun, as we're used to do, an' seldom go wrong somehow?"

"Jaw, jabber!—ax pardon, shipmit; didn't by no manner o' manes intend an offence; but what I want you to put down isn't the time o' the hour, d'ye see me, but the date o' the month we have, wid the day of the year."

"Och, ay; the day o' the month and the figures o' the year, that is id, is to go down first, admiral; that's what you mane, we b'lieve," corrected Murty: "an' you're right; yes, the year an' the day goes down, at the first offer, bee course;" and the penman went on, still very cautiously bringing his instrument to bear on the long-covered point of attack. "Well; this is the year aighteen hundhred an' one, isn't it?"

There was silence, and he paused a moment in deep study. "Yes; aighteen hundhred an' one." From a confused recollection of the dashing manner in which "the masther in the school" used to commence similar tasks, he gave two or three flourishes of his pen, at a civil distance, however, from the paper, as many a boastful man will make a show of fighting without soon coming to blows.

"Aighteen hundhred an' one," continued Murty, and he repeated the words five times at the least; and then, giving up his affected mastery over the pen, he once more very cautiously moved it, thrice resolved on a beginning.

The admiral watched him with keenest attention; and Chevaun, sharing his feelings in her own way, pulled her stool close to her husband, and poked her head almost over the table.

The pen at length touched the oft-threatened mark; but Murty's difficulties were not thereby lessened. It will be recollected that, since the

sponging process, the paper had remained damp, and that, previously, Murty's hand had rasped it into a fuzzy surface; so that, in this state of preparation, as soon as Murty now described upon it the first figure, which he meant to stand at the beginning of the year's date, the lines of that figure chose gradually to swim and mingle together, under his astounded eyes, and so went on till they ended in one unintelligible blur. He paused: his lower jaw dropped, and he stared at the self-defacing lines, as if he had witnessed witchcraft.

"Ill loock agin—an' more an' more iv id!" at last groaned Murty; "an' what *bolgh* is on id now, I wondher?"

"Haze-a-head," cried the admiral, slapping Murty, in what he meant to be an encouraging manner, between the shoulders, for he had noticed the undisguised drooping of the man of letters, and sought to prop him up; "haze-a-head, and that's all; cheer up, my jolly boy; hard tackin', sometimes, getting out o' port:

but when you once make sey-room enough to spread canvass, nine knots an hour won't catch you—sink me to ould Davy, if they will!"

"Musha, may be it's wet is on the poor crature iv a paper," surmised Chevaun.

"Faix, and I believe it is," agreed her husband, somewhat relieved; and he arose and held it to the fire, kneeling to his task; and in this position turned round his head to address his hearers. "Well, well; the praises for all: there's no tellin', now-a-days, when a poor boy sits down to do any one thing, what crosses an' what conthrary things may come to pass afore he—och! tundhur an' agis!"

Thus did Murty interrupt his own moralizing, as the paper suddenly caught fire, blazed up, and scorched his fingers, causing him instinctively to let it go. "Ulla—loo—oo!" he went on; "niver sich a misfort'nit writin' mit me in my born days, afore—sure there was some curse on you!" and with a countenance of the most extreme mortification he watched, still kneel-

ing, the expiring ashes of the paper, as, speck by speck, the caloric flitted from it The breeze came in sharply at the open door, and, hastening to get out of the house again as fast as possible, whisked up the wide chimney, and soon carried with it even those relics of old raggery.

"There!" resumed Murty; "ould Nick has you now, an' let *him* write on you, if he can."

"Auld ship blown up," announced the admiral, beginning himself to feel at last discomfited in his hopes of "a memorandle o' sarvice."

"An' haven't you ne'er another scrap o' paper about you, admiral?" asked his secretary.

"Scuttle an' sink me to ould Davy—no! locker cleaned out this voyage, shipmit."

"Maybe I'd find a bit," said Chevaun; and her husband and his friend fixed their eyes on her movements. When—

"Fresh squall comin' on—heavy cloud right a-head!" piped the admiral.

"Never a welcome to whoever it is," grumbled Murty.

CHAPTER IV.

A FIGURE suddenly darkened the door-way. It was that of a female, wearing the deep-blue peasant-mantle of the district. She stood still and silent, with her back to the inside of the house, and of course to our friends; and the ample cloak, falling close to her shoulders, and down her sides, in two straight lines, while its gathered hood was drawn over her head, baffled observation as to who or what she was, neighbour or stranger.

"Never a welcome to whoever it is," grumbled Murty.

"Amin, say I, till the writin' is over," echoed Chevaun.

"Ship a-hoy—ii!" hailed the admiral, angrily, through his speaking-trumpet.

The person slowly turned sideways on the spot where she stood, and even in her movement there was sadness. Her left hand and arm now appeared through the folds of her cloak, and a pair of new light blue worsted stockings hung from the latter. She spoke a few words in a low tone, and they fell on the ear like the melancholy though musical trickling of drops of water in a little basin, half covered with sedge, in a lonely place. They were spoken tears.

"I don't think you know who it is that's keepin' the May sun from your dour-stone, Chevaun," she said; and still her face was quite hidden by the cloak-hood which almost closed in front of it.

"Ochown! bud sure I know your own poor voice, now!" cried Chevaun, in great interest,

as she endeavoured to push her way to the visiter by the side of the cross-legged table, "Mary, a-lanna! how are you, the mornin'?"

"In good health, I give thanks, Chevaun: an' I'm only cum wid the first o' my knittin' for Murty." She held out the stockings on her arm. The mistress of the house had now gained her side, and greeted her kindly.

"Murther, Mary! an' is id you! an' how is every inch i you, aothone?" exclaimed Murty, his inhospitable tone also changed for the better, as, in his turn, he seized the visiter's hands, and shook them violently.

"Ship on her beam-ends!" proclaimed the admiral, somewhat reprehensively, as he sprang to set up again the table which, in his amiable haste, Murty had overturned.

"Come in, a-cuishla, come in," resumed Chevaun, "sure this is no place for you to be stannin!"

"Yes, roul in the four bones o' you!" said Murty, throwing an arm round her waist; and

Mary passively suffered herself to be led, or rather hurled, into the house.

The two women proceeded towards the fire-place; Chevaun sat on the hob, almost facing the door, so that her face remained fully visible; the other on a "boss,"* confronting Mrs. Meehan, the hood of her cloak still unmoved, and her features, as well as her person, still a mystery to the ould admiral. Murty deposited himself on a second boss, on one side of the females, with the air and manner of a person who, without much intrusion, had a right to loiter within ear-shot of whatever they were about to say; and Terence O'Brien remained where he had been, after adjusting the table, his legs apart, his one arm hanging straight by his side, his one fist clenched, and his eyes and whole face angrily—one would think—regarding the group.

"An' the poor ould mother—how is she,

* A low, round seat, made solidly with coils of twisted straw.

a-lanna-ma-chree?" resumed Chevaun, stooping her head close to that of the person she addressed.

Mary answered in a still lower and more saddened voice than that she had used at the door, accompanying the mournful sounds with a slow rocking motion of the body; and a conversation went on between her and Chevaun, of which the admiral caught not a sentence, though it might be supposed, from the expression of his visage, as well as from his set attitude, that he listened attentively—which, however, was not the case. Whatever art might or might not have done to make him a gentleman, the ould admiral was one by nature—in the heart—and he would have spurned the idea of turning eve's-dropper upon the confidential discourse of any persons, gentle or simple. But he could not help observing that Mary's auditors seemed deeply affected with what she told them. Indeed, Murty's huge, good blue eyes grew moist as they fixed on her's, and the tears ran outright down his

wife's vermilion cheeks; while many a sympathising "och!" and "murther!" with other ejaculations of sorrow and compassion, broke in loud accents from their lips. And so sweetly touching still were the cadences of Mary's plaintive, though unheard words, whatever they imported, that as a child would do, Terence almost began to follow Chevaun's example on the occasion, "for company;" when one other query, now put by that good woman, so as to be heard by him, gave his feelings a new direction.

"An' poor Terry O'Brien, Mary *a-chorra?*"

"A-hoy! Here!" answered Terence, making a step forward, and again standing stock-still on his extended legs, as if answering to a "musther on deck."

But Chevaun and Murty only motioned to him to be quiet and mute, while their visiter, after a bound on her seat, at the boisterous and sudden interruption he had given, drew her cloak tighter round her head and face, and became, after a long-drawn sigh, quite silent.

All followed her example, and there was a sad pause for some time, which Murty at length broke by softly drawing from Mary's arm the stockings she had already hinted were for his use, and praising them to the skies. Then Chevaun suddenly started up, withdrew into an inner room—if so we may call that portion of the cabin separated from the place where they sat only by a wicker partition, not reaching to the roof, nor even from wall to wall, across the clay-floor—and returned with a little basket, containing some unseen articles, which, with many entreaties, she forced Mary to accept. Terence thought he began to surmise the cause of Mary's grief, and formed his resolutions accordingly.

"Well, I must be stirring now," said the object of his interest; and she arose, and, features and person still cloked up from him, was passing to the door after a farewell shake-hands on the part of honest Murty, and a kiss, through tears, on that of his spouse. Terence, with

another hail, and another step, gained her side, and dropped something into her basket. Mary, again starting, picked out of it "a raal balloon guinea," instantly deposited the coin on the table, and saying, as if avoidingly, "No, no—not from you—no, no!" walked smartly away from the house.

"But you might, though," bawled Terence after her; "it's a threw yellow-boy, every splice of id—an' honestly got, 'board ould ship—my hulk to ould Davy, but it is! But she won't answer hail; well, well, I see what's in the wind—thinks the ould seyman can't afford it—or else thinks he had it by piracy." Such were Terence's sagacious guesses at Mary's notions, which, however, he was to live to understand a little better. Chevaun and Murty looked expressively at each other.

"Ay, ay," resumed Terence; "but all's one for that; since she will sheer off, up goes the shiner into the ould locker again," and he replaced it in his waistcoat pocket; an' so,

shipmit, the ould hulk to shove off, too, on a new tack, without any memorandle a-board—eh, shipmit?"

"Och, no, thin, an' blessings on the kind heart in your body!" answered Murty, his mind more full than ever of anxiety to do the admiral a service, notwithstanding the many interruptions his previous efforts had undergone. In fact, his own honest nature was grateful for Terence's proof of sympathy towards poor Mary.

"No, no, don't stir a step, yet, for the life o' you!" seconded Chevaun, in something of the same spirit.

Again she moved, and again the eyes of her husband and Terence followed her. Chevaun made her way to the cupboard, and was about to open it, when she paused, turned towards her friends, and solemnly addressed them.

"I'll tell yez what was a loocky thing, afther all."

Murty anxiously demanded "what?"

"That when the paper tuk fire there was none o' the writin' on id."

"Bee gownies!' an' so it was," cheerfully assented her husband, rejoicing in any set-off against his undeniable ill-luck.

"Ay, ay, right, misthress," also agreed the admiral; "good chance iv a sart'nty, that none o' the crew were aboord when ould ship blew up; for up along wid it they'd ha' gone, and not a sowl saved, d'ye see me."

"See that, now," resumed Mrs. Meehan, congratulating herself upon her ingenious remark; "there's nothin' so bad in this world, but it might be worse. An' so, Murty, agra, don't be down-hearted any longer." She laid her hand on that of her husband, and looked commiseratingly into his face; "let by-gones be by-gones; what's past can't be helped if a body were to lay down a life for id."

"Thrue for you, Chevaun; bud will you be able to make out another scrap o' the paper?"

"There's the gorsoon's copy-book in the

cupboard—can't we just tear a lafe out o' that, Murty, a *cuishla-ma-chree ?*"

"Bee gownies, an' so we can! you war always an' ivir a kind sowl, Chevaun," smiled Murty, greatly relieved—"the heavens prosper you."

For we do not remember exactly how many times everything and every person were again ready. It may be surmised that, previous to his wife's happy thought of the gorsoon's copy-book, Murty Mechan had, from his repeated failures, become somewhat cooled in his first estimate of his own capability to master the task before him, and, notwithstanding his seeming anxiety to persevere, might perhaps have half wished to elude it—up the chimney, if he could—with the burnt paper. Now, however, Chevaun's presence of mind left him no excuse for drawing back: and either he prepared to renew his efforts in a kind of hopeless determination to do his best, or else the sight of the fresh leaf of paper

really renewed his courage, and endowed him with the spirit, and, joined to his experience, with the tact which—we are proud to say it—ensured his ultimate success.

"Yes, plaise the pigs, we'll mind oursef this time, at any rate—and a watchful season is nivir scarce," was the philosophical adage with which he now set down to recommence the "Bit o' Writin'."

"Sink my ould hulk to ——" began the admiral.

"Whist, Terry O'Brien," suddenly interrupted Chevaun, "we'll have none o' the salt-wather cursin', now, if we want to escape more o' the *dhunnus*."

The admiral fidgeted, but stood convinced, reproved, and silent.

"The date o' the year," said Murty.

"Ay, ay, the date o' the year, first of all, shipmit."

"Aighteen hundhred an' one, then," Murty repeated, slowly muttering; and as in deep

thought he strove to call to mind the shapes of the figures which should designate the era, his pen described above the paper two or three cautious flourishes, almost as before.

A figure of 8, lying on its back, thus, ∞, was described. He snatched up the pen, and looked earnestly at the real commencement of his task. All was right. Neither pen, ink, nor paper played him false, "this turn." He moved the sheet from side to side, accompanying it by wagging his head from shoulder to shoulder. He resumed, still repeating, "aighteen hundhred an' one."

Two additional figures were produced, and the embryo document became antedated by about one thousand years. The whole of the figures stood thus, "∞01."

"There's the date o' the year, plain to be seen, we b'lieve, admiral," he said, glancing at his neighbour with ill-disguised pride.

"I like the cut o' their jibs, well, my hearty; they're o' the right sort iv a sart'inty;

ay, ay, able-bodied saymen, every hand o' them."

"Musha, the goodness be praised," said Chevaun, with a happy sigh; "an' see what it is to get the larnin' arly; not brought up to the handlin' the paper like a cow or a horse?"

"An' isn't the day o' the month to be your tack now, jolly boy?"

"That's to be put in, bee all manes, admiral."

There were a few more passing flourishes, and then ensued the actual operation. The pen went up and down, heavily grating against the rough paper.

"Yee-ho! yee-ho! ho-yee!" sung Terence O'Brien, keeping time to the pen's movement, and shrill harsh noise; "undher way, at last, my hearty: I like the sound o' your tackle—it's like ould ship's in a stiff breeze—yee ho!"

Murty smiled with the conscious glee of certain success, thus added to by the admiral's

approbation, while, at his other side, his wife further encouraged him.

"Didn't I know, Murty, *a-cuishla?* didn't I know the second offer 'ud thrive? that, an' barrin' the cursin'."

And so, Murty went on producing, by degrees, a full crew of "able-bodied saymen;" not an unapt term, by the way, when applied to his striding, straggling, burly characters.

For two good hours was the amanuensis' hand at work. He would stop in the middle of a word; spell over the letters of it which he had just written; oblige the admiral to repeat it for him; endeavour to ascertain how much of its sound he had succeeded in typifying: get the remainder into his mind in a jumble, and then proceed very ambiguously to express what had been very ambiguously apprehended. His "saymen," therefore, stood quite independent of each other, or, at least, but seldom linked together.

And, while placing a point over an i, Murty would steal down the pen, and not always exactly fix it over the proper character, and then turn it round and round, until the point became swollen to a goodly size; or, in crossing a t, his first essay was very gradually made, and the whole process amusing. He would, as the admiral called it, steer his instrument with his left hand, and then quietly and slowly scrape it across the upright letter. But, indeed, on this one matter, practice gave him courage, as he got on; for, at length, he would make a bold dash with his pen, and deviating from a horizontal course, divide into two parts, not invariably equal portions, whatever letters happened to come in his way. And pretty nearly thus, till his task was quite completed, did Murty reduce to paper the stentorian dictation of the ould admiral.

But his task was indeed finished. And he slowly arose to dry the paper at the fire; but, in full recollection of a former adventure, as

well as in obedience to Terence's warning of —"Fire-ship a-head—a-hoy!" and of Chevaun's —"Have a care now, Murty, agra!" he kept it well clear of the turf-blaze.

Dried the document became without hap or injury. Murty, suspending it by a corner, strode the few strides which he could take on his cabin floor, and slowly held it up to the full view of his admiring spouse, who well understood his glance and smile to mean—

"See, Chevaun, what it is to have a scholard for your husband."

Nor was he slow in apprehending that the answering drawing-up of the muscles about Chevaun's mouth, the poking forward of her head to the invited scrutiny, and the wide-open expression of her eyes as they afterwards met his, plainly said—

"Yes, Murty, a wondher o' the world you are—an' good rason I have to be proud o' you."

"Here it is, now, for you, admiral," said Murty, then presenting the document to its owner: "an' it's loock we wish you wid it, admiral, avich!" His tones, air, and manner, were graciously patronizing.

CHAPTER V.

After due reflection and consultation on the matter, Terence O'Brien, or the ould admiral, arrived at several pretty accurate conclusions touching the further disposal and progress of the "memorandle o' sarvice."

He had heard—beyond doubt he was sure—of such a place as the Admiralty office, "in the port of London," and judged that thither he ought to forward it. As a first step towards this, he soon became aware that the document should be "put aboord the post-office," in the neighbouring town, and thence that it was to continue its voyage "aboord the mail-

coach." Right well was he aware that he at present lived on an island, separated from another island, in which was the "port o' Lunnon," by a sea. That his "memorandle" was to be received and forwarded, on and from, the coast of that first island, as one of "ould ship's papers," without at the same time shipping the mail-coach or its other contents, Terence rather suspected, but indeed could not be quite certain of the fact; nor did he find Murty Meehan, who had never yet caught a glimpse of the sea, nor received nor forwarded a letter of any kind, in his life, able to enlighten him on the subject. It might be so, or it might not be so; thus they decided between them; and eventually the admiral, suddenly struck with the conviction that the question, turn out as it might, was no concern of his, made up his mind to leave it undecided. "The Capt'n o' the Post-office" was the man whom it concerned, and not him, Terence O'Brien. Every commander of a vessel knew

how everything ought to be done aboard his own ship, from the splicing of a cable to the firing of a broadside; and agreeably to this notion of the post-master's competency in his duties, Terence argued that his paper, once delivered into the hands of that person—just as it had come out of Murty Meehan's hands—by-the-way, unfolded and undirected—ought to arrive safe at the end of its voyage; a mere announcement of its destination being obviously sufficient to enable the captain to supply and superintend all the details of its progress upon the way.

"What else was the ould loober on that station for?" and so Terence set forward for the post-town nearest to his residence.

The post-master was in the act of delivering the morning letters, and a crowd of people gathered round the window of his office. Had we leisure we might attempt to produce some pathetic and some ludicrous surmises as to the different feelings in which different individuals

of the throng stretched forward their hands, and exerted their voices, claiming their expected dispatches; but we must not pause to indulge our speculations, or show our skill, at the expense of the reader's patience. With one person alone, of all present, we dally for a moment.

He stood on the outskirts of the crowd, quietly awaiting his turn to go to the window, saying nothing, pushing or hurrying nobody, and resting both his hands upon his stick. He seemed a very personification of patience and humility. Either he had never, even in youth, possessed any dash in his character, or the pinching poverty now visible in his sharp features, and peculiar attire, had long ago frozen it out of him. His head-gear was very ancient, and yet made the most of; he would seem fully to have studied and approved the celebrated adage, that "the life of an old hat consists in cocking it." His person was draped in a kind of frock-coat of coarse grey kersey,

reaching below his knees, so fashioned as to save him from the sarcasm of going too heavily clad in summer, or of having an appearance of almost nakedness in very cold weather: for the garment could not be called an outside coat at the one season, nor a thin coat at the other. Originally his leg had been well shaped: and at such a period of its existence, had first taken possession of that part of the pantaloon which at present covered it; but abstemious living, for many years, since then, had shrunk its calf, so that it now allowed its vesture to ruffle in wrinkles to the wind. And it was not difficult to conjecture, from his general appearance, and the hints supplied by his face and deportment, that his blay stockings had been "darned" by his own careful hands; while his shoes were water-proof, in sole, upper, and quarter, because, from year to year, they had been diligently watched; and the moment time made a rent or a crack in them, no matter how small, immediately and intently patched in the

frail place, with a view to prevent each breach from widening.

We have not a great deal to do with this man, so we crave pardon for volunteering a short sketch of him.

"A-hoy, my hearty!" bellowed Terence O'Brien at his ear, in a tone that would have made him start, or at least look offended, had he not long abandoned all hastiness of movement or of feeling; or he might have deemed that, as the term "hearty" could certainly not apply to him, he was not the person addressed. At all events, he only turned, slowly and quietly, his sharp little face to the speaker.

"Post-office thransport a-head—eh, my jolly lad?" still questioned the tar, pointing to the window.

"If it's the post-office you want, yes, there it is; though it's no thransport, as I know of, my honest man," answered little Patience.

"Scuttle my hulk to ould Davy! you don't mane to call it a frigate, do you?"

"You have my lave to call it a man-o'-war if that same gives you the laste pleasure."

"No—shiver my timbers to splinters if I do! Hah! do you want to come over the ould sayman that way, you loober? I'd spy out a man-o-war seven leagues to windward, you land-shark."

"Well, well, just as you like."

"Capt'n gives ordhers at the gunnel,—eh?"

"I don't well undherstand your maning."

Muttering something like contempt for the ignorance of all "land-loobers," Terence steered direct for the post-office window.

"Scud, scud—avast, my hearties! I say," he bellowed forth, forcing his way through all opposition; and he presented his unique visage at the open wooden pane through which letters were distributed.

"Ship's paper—ould ship's—will your honour take it aboord?" and he held out his "memorandle o' sarvice."

"What do you want? what do you call this?" questioned the post-master.

"Sink my hulk! what do I call it? why, are your lights out, capt'n, or can't you take an observation?"

The captain peered and peered. He took off his spectacles and wiped them in the ample though rather soiled muslin frill of his shirt. He peered again, and his lips moved, as if in an honest effort to spell his way through the manuscript. He raised up his head and looked attentively from it to the disfigured face of the "sayman;" then to the paper again; and then to that index visage again.

"What is it at all, man? and what do you wish me to do about it?"

"Why, don't you see, it's a memorandle o' sarvice? what else would it be?"

"And pray inform me how am I to dispose of such a dirty piece of nonsense?"

"Avast there capt'n, you loober! Fair weather between us; 'tis as thrue as the log, every word of id."

Once more the good-natured post-master

bent his eyes studiously upon Murty Meehan's penmanship, and began to mutter—" 'Terry O—O'Brien,'—I suppose, um—um—'a la burbe,'—um—um—'shot close to his body,'—here, my man," interrupting himself, and handing back the document, as many impatient voices called aloud for their letters—" I can make no hand of your paper or yourself—take it away, and leave the window clear."

" Take it away, capt'n !" echoed poor Terence, rather crest-fallen; it wasn't to take it away I towed it in here, from Muckalee—you'll just ship it for the Admiralty board—eh, capt'n ?"

" Get away with it—take it out of my hand, I tell you—there—go—get it properly written—stand back—and let sensible people come for their letters."

Beginning to entertain some slight doubt of the clerkship of his Muckalee friend, the ould admiral was obliged to retire with his " memorandle :" not indeed until he had fought hard

to have it received "aboord." Having cleared the crowd, he stopt in the middle of the street, to ponder what next was to be done.

The little man he had before accosted, followed him closely, though quietly, at a cat's pace, when she steals step by step within springing distance of a fat mouse. He had overheard the dialogue between Terence and the post-master, and it was not quite thrown away upon him. In his imagination — we use an inapt word—in his sober, unromantic, practical calculations, we should rather say—the document had already set the kettle singing, and the pot boiling for a better breakfast and a more substantial dinner than he had for some time been intimate with.

When arrived close to Terence, that worthy fragment of a Jack was holding the paper close to his eyes,—and, to help him still more, turned upside down,—endeavouring to discover in what respect it was deficient for a voyage "'boord the Post-office thransport."

"Looking as wise as a pig at a sun-dial," commenced his future friend to himself; then he continued aloud—

"Honest man, was that wrote wid a spade or a shovel? which o' the two?"

"What jaw, now? what jaw!" demanded Terence, angrily and ominously.

"I say it's either the spade or the shovel wrote that paper."

Terence nearly lost all command of temper at this double slight of his own importance, and of the zealous and hitherto but slightly questioned services of an esteemed neighbour.—"It's a lie, you loober! it's a lie!" he thundered forth, raising the document to slap it across the face of the commentator.

Notwithstanding the incivility of the commencement of their dialogue, these dissimilar men were, however, in a short time better acquainted. However ignorant at first of the right road to an object, self-interest is generally a ready scholar in finding it out.

Very gradually the uselessness of the document became explained to Terence, and was comprehended by him; and the little half-starved man and he eventually struck a bargain on the business, and were seen to walk down the street together.

The admiral was led up a narrow dirty lane, and he and his convoy entered a dilapidated house, over the door of which was a sign-board, announcing it as the abode of

"GARRET BYRNE,
PUBLICK WRITTER."

The personage so described, Garret Byrne, fixed a wicker-backed chair as his desk, sat to it upon a three-legged stool, and without a tithe of poor Murty Mechan's preparations, with none of his failures or misfortunes, and devoting to his task an incredibly short portion of time in the opinion of Terence O'Brien, produced something like a proper letter to the Admiralty Board. It was even folded, directed, and wafered, and then Garret Byrne asked and

received a reward, dishonest in him to propose, and very improvident in his employer to bestow; and finally, Terence saw him "put it aboord" at the post-office; after which, the public writer and his dupe adjourned into a dram-shop, to pour down, at the expense of but one of the party, libations to its prosperous voyage.

CHAPTER VI.

After the sailing of his despatches, the admiral kept a sharp look-out for an answer. But he was not impatient in point of time. He made due allowance for the weather-gage, and reckoning a certain number of knots to an hour, for the out-bound and the in-bound voyage, did not begin to hail "the post-office thransport" again till his nautical experience told him he was warranted in doing so. Nor was Terence much out in his calculations, when a letter, directed to him—absolutely to him—appeared at the post-office in due course.

It did not, however, contain money, nor an

order for money; it only called on him to prepare and forward various certificates and affidavits. No matter. The certificates and affidavits were soon ready, under the superintendence of his now established agent, Garret Byrne, and a cheque for a good round sum came at last.

At the bank of the town, being conducted still by Garret Byrne, the ould admiral sunk "all thim bits o' notes to ould Davy," and would accept nothing but gold—"the yallow boys, an' nothing else for him;" and so gold he got. We wish the reader were present on the occasion, to notice the expression of the eyes and even of the pointed nose of the "publick writter," as the guineas jingled on the counter. But it is enough to say that out of them he managed to extract a second enormous fee for his services since the despatch of the first letter. A second jorum of grog, too, was shared between him and the sailor, to the heart's content of Terence and to Garret's slight and momentary vivification.

The evening began to fall, and it was time to go homewards. Assisted by his companion, Terence tied up his gold in the useless sleeve of his jacket, using two strings, one below, and another above the bulk made by his hoard; he further secured it by crossing the sleeve upon his breast, and stuffing it into his bosom: and then he clutched his cudgel in his left (and only) hand, and scudded homeward, every inch of canvass to the breeze.

"Praise be to the heavens! nivir, since the day I was born, did mysef sit my two eyes on sich a hape o' the goold," said Murty Meehan, as he, Chevaun, and the admiral, contemplated it on their table, where it had been tossed out by its owner among the pile of potatoes served up for their evening supper.

"It's wondherful to look at id," agreed Chevaun.

"Many a rough gale the ould hulk weathered for it, misthriss, an' many and many a broadside went to win it."

"No daubt o' that," continued Murty; "bud, bee gonnies! you can't say but you're well pid for all your throubles an' losses, ould admiral aroon; it isn't the half o' my nose, bud the whole o' my nose I'd give for sich a fort'n; ay, even supposin' they stuck a turkey-cock's baik to my face instid—not to talk of a Frinchman's; ay, or I'd go widout e'er an arum at all, or I'd hop on only one leg into the bargain all the blessed days o' my life, for the honest gainin' o' so much threasure."

"God forgive you, Murty Meehan," said Chevaun; take care o' what you're sayin'; the heavens forbid you'd be spoiled in sich a manner for the double iv id, over again."

"But what, in the name o' wondher, will you do wid it, at all, admiral?"

"Why d'ye see me, that's just what I'm a jawin' to myself about, my hearty; but a-hoy, my jolly lad! we'll work it in company—oceans o' grog for say-store, and every sail up while it lasts!—Eh, shipmit?—a cruise together—an

ould ship scuddin', no matther what point the wind blows from, eh?"

"Och, no, admiral; that 'ud be a cryin' sin for the both iv us."

"'Twould be murther, intirely," said Chevaun.

"A sin?—avast, there, avast; can't cram that down the wizen iv an ould sayman. No, no; mutinee a-boord is a sin; sleepin', or gettin' dhrunk on watch, is a sin; not stannin' up be your gun, in action, is a sin—an' sich like: the ould jolly boy knows well what they call a sin —ay, as well as e'er a hand a-boord; bud the chaplain himself never said that shippin' grog, on pay-out days, whin you're let to sheer off ashore, is a sin—shiver his hulk! he couldn't say id, the loober!"

"Why, admiral, for the mere matther o' that, I would not pelt a stone at a full bottle myself," resumed Murty; "for I like a dhrop well enough, betimes, maybe; only wid this differ, that I'd give my wote for the *oneen* widout

christenin' id;* that grog o' yours is a wakely sort o' dhrinkin' to my mind, admiral; bud all I want to say is, that it would be a robbin' shame an' a schandle to waste so mooch money as this on the table upon dhrink iv any kind."

"Then stow it into your own locker for me, my hearty; if it stops 'boord ould ship 'tis gone, iv a sartinty, d'ye see me?" and he pushed the gold towards Murty.

"Och! no, no; that won't do, either, my poor ould admiral."

"Stow it up for yourself then, I say, shipmit; and for the misthriss-mate, there, an' for the brig Peggy, out on her cruise o' sarvice, an' for loblolly Paudeen, d'ye see me—one or all—ye may want it, or know what to do wid id, which I don't, d'ye mind me, barrin' I sarve id out for the grog—my hulk to ould Davy if I do."

"No, no, over agin, admiral; we're as hearti-

* That is, he would vote for pure whiskey, without watering it.

ly thankful, all as one, as if we made our own iv id; bud no other man's money will ever burthen my conscience; no, or rear up my childher, morebetoken; an' sure, it's for somethin' o' the like reason I have the *weenochs* on the same place wid me, at all at all; for whin a very wise body axed me why I was goin' to be married, an' I only a lump iv a soft boy, at the same time, admiral,—a kind o' one o' your lobjolly boys, you know, only a taste bigger, an' handier at the spade maybe—'Why, sir,' says I, 'the reason is this, sir, savin' your presence, sir,' says I, 'I'm able to work a start, sir, an' I don't like to be workin' for any man's childher but my own, sir,' says I."

"Well, well, that's all as id may be; bud what *am* I to do wid the yellow-boys, if you sing out no to the grog, shipmit?"

"Sure, as I said afore, on the head o' the bit o' writin', that all this goold cum by——" (Terence had been too generous to pain Murty with intelligence of the failure of his document,

or of the intervention of Garret Byrne thereupon,) "sure, as I said afore, there's your brother, admiral."

"Avast, avast, man! as *I* tould *you* afore, shiver and scuttle my hulk to ould Davy, if he ever touches a stiver iv id! That same brother is no brother to me, but a d——d landshark—shuvvin' me out to say agin, when I thought to moor my ould hulk here, in the ould soundin's—'case why? he said I couldn't work ship wid him—the greedy unnathral loober! ay, ay, adhrift he turned me, mainmast, riggin', and rhudder gone, an' not a day's provision aboord! So jaw no more about him, d'ye see me."

"'Twas bad usage enough; we won't gainsay you, my poor ould admiral; bud his poor slob iv a boy, the son—*he* done nothin' to you."

"Done nothin' to me! isn't he one of the crew? sailin' undher his father's colours and ordhers?—his father commandher?—an' wouldn't he do by me whatever he's commanded to do, bee

coorse, or else go to the yard-arum?—what else could he do?"

"Well, admiral agra, I'tell you what kind iv a thought comes to me, then."

"Out wid it, my hearty."

"You're reasonable ould—we can't gainsay that either, you know."

"Ay, ay, shipmit; an ould sheer hulk on the wather, goin' to pieces every say; but Irish—I mane English—heart iv oak, every plank o' me, howsomever."

"All bud what you call the *uddher*, admiral an' a quare name it is to give a nose."

Murty unconsciously slipt an *r*, at the beginning of the word, which he meant as an imitation of Terence's word *ruddher*, or rudder; and, indeed was thinking of, as he intimated, a strange enough object from which to draw, even with full poetical license, an image of any human nose—namely, the udder of a cow. But, among his own familiar mental stock of illustration, it was nearest in sound to the word used by his neighbour.

"Ay, ay, sink an' d—— id! I forgot that, shipmit; but let it go to ould Davy, an' say your say out."

"Well, aroon; what I'm thinkin' iv is soon said. I'm thinkin' now, that wid the help of all this goold, an' since you're goin' to pieces, as you say yoursef, it wouldn't be a bad notion if you had one to look afther you, an' keep you together."

"Hollo! where are you bound for now, my jolly lad?"

"Faix, an' all I mane is, supposin' you was to take on wid a wife, admiral?"

"A wife!" shouted Terence O'Brien, in utter amazement; "a wife alongside? No, no, shipmit; no one will never see me join company with that kind o' craft; no, no; grapple to the locker is the word aboord with all sich—grapple to the locker; an' when no more say-store is left, then shove off, d'ye see me? No; never a painted schooner of 'em shall take the ould hulk in tow."

Terence was calling to mind some kind of Wapping adventure.

"An' sorry we'd be, ould admiral, to see the best among them use her toe to you, or her five fingers either. But little's the danger o' that here, in Muckalee. Them sort you spake iv lives by the say-shore; but our honest counthry girrels isn't given to any sich kind o' doins."

"Avast, lad, avast; all she-pirates and sharks, one wid another. When first I steered home here to Muckalee, 'case I didn't carry bags o' goold for ballast, didn't your whole squadron of that craft cock up their noses at me, as your land-sayin' goes?"

"Bud, sure, you ped 'em back in their own coin, and widout any throuble," smiled Murty, again venturing the sore allusion.

"Ay, ay; but sink that, I say. Didn't one of 'em call me as ugly an ould fish as ever swum? and another say I was a *farh brecghoch*,* an' ax me to let her stick me in her father's

* Scarecrow.

whate-field? An' that young fire-ship, Nance Dulhanty, didn't she — the craft wid the red lanthron at her poop, I mane—didn't she set my pig-tail a-blaze, at her ould granny's wake? An' Kitty Doyle! I was a cruzin' on the top o' the hill, d'ye see me, an' she an' a fleet o' doxies wid her, at the bottom; an' she hails me to join company, an' I tacks to bear down on 'em; an' she an' they ties the long land-grass right across the channel, an' I strikes on id, and comes on my bame-inds—ay, over an' over, till the ould hulk righted again—an' the whole crew o' them singing an' pipin' out to me, all the time, in make-game, like? Avast, I tell you, shipmit, they're all the same, by say-shore, or by land-shore—all the same."

"Why, thin, we're much behouldin' to your good word, misther admiral," remarked Mrs. Meehan.

"Didn't mane you, jolly misthress; didn't nivir mane you; you're not one of the sort; I mane the young light-deckers, as skuds on

every tack, in all weathers, sthramers flyin' in every breeze."

"Sure, then, we'll get one for you as old as the hills, if you like," said Murty.

"An' that won't go down, neither, my hearty; luff, luff; two sheer hulks, bobbin' shivered planks together, every swell—never do; singin' out, too, 'avast, avast,' in every cap-full o' wind—ay, or if there was ever gun left aboord, exchanging shots, I warrant you."

"Faith, an' you're a'most in the right, now, we b'lieve, though you did live so long on the wather, admiral," grinned Murty.

"Musha, an' I'm afeard he is, Lord purtect us," added Mrs. Meehan, more seriously.

"But," resumed her honest man, "sure you don't see mooch o' the bobbin' or vastin', or toein', or scuddin', or singin', or shootin', betwixt Chevaun, here, an' my own sef, admiral?"

"No, no, all fair sailin', in company, there, an' breeze right a-head."

"Well, an' wouldn't you like Chevaun's likes for a voyage, as you call id?"

"Hallo, shipmit! goin' to change tack? only say the word, an' I'm for the cruize, in your stead, d'ye see me—ay, wid all my heart an' lights, my hearty!" and Terence spoke—we stake our veracious character on the fact—in perfect, simple seriousness.

"Ho, ho, ho! we couldn't manage that matther so asily—none iv us, admiral."

"What jaw, then—what jaw?"

"Why, God forgive you, man, sure isn't poor Chevaun an' mysef to be in company, as yoursef has id, till death does us part?"

"Foundher to ould Davy, then, an' lave the misthress-mate an' I say-room."

"We don't want to have a call to that fellow, I tould you afore, admiral."

"Go aloft, then, you loober."

"An' I can't pleasure you that way, neither—at laste till we have the little pee-aties out o' the ground, asthore."

"Well—an' what port are you steerin' for, then?"

"No port at all; I'll stay in the port where I am; an' Chevaun an' I will be pleasant company wid one another, these hundhred years to come, plaise God. Bud, admiral; there's one little Moya Moore, an' she's the born sisther o' Chevaun—nearer to her she couldn't be; an' she's very like Chevaun, only a younger girril; an' she's amost as purty as Chevaun—and she's amost as good as Chevaun—an' that's a great word."

"Ay, ay—I spoke wid Moya Moore, shipmit, the night o' my cruize to Nance Dulhanty's granny's wake—an' 'twas she put out the fire, 'boord ould hulk, when Nance set the rishlight to my pig-tail—ay, spoke wid her, then, an' often afore an' since; ay, ay; an' now that I call to mind, that little craft, Moya, is the only one o' your jade-squadron that never says nothin' to gibe the ould sayman,—never does, an never did; ay, ay."

"She'd make a nate, an' a clane, an' a laucky* wife, for the ould admiral," observed her prudent sister: "yes, an' you spoke to her later than you think, admiral; she was here the day o' the writin'."

"Whin you gave me sich a hail by my name, misthress, an' she an' you a-joinin' together? an' I never knew her, from the new cut of her canvass. But why wou'dn't she share a little say-store wid me? why sheer off in a rumpus, at only the sight o' the shiner?"

"Shy she was, may be, admiral, to take any help from a body that wou'dn't be a blood relation to her; don't blame the poor crature for that."

"Help! disthress aboord, then, though no signal hoisted? But why did you sing out, 'the Terry O'Brien a-hoy!' misthress, if I was to bear no hand, d'ye see me?"

Chevaun and her husband interchanged a look similar to that which had passed between

* Tidy and gracious.

them upon the very occasion alluded to. Evidently they thought Terence in some misconception.

"Never mind about the hoy, admiral, for the prasent; bud, yes, asthore,—disthress, sure enough, is come on poor Moya; the ould mother has a nice bit o' land, to be sure, only there's an ould arrear over id, ever since her husband died; an' she an' Moya will be turned out on the world-wide, this May, barrin' somethin' takes it off for 'em."

"Sent adhrift? sink my hulk, but they sha'n't, though! Show me the loober that daare think of id, an' if I don't blow him clane off the wather, at the first broadside, scuttle me for ould Davy."

"That wou'dn't be the way, admiral," said Murty; "the thing to be done is, to blow the arrears off o' the land. And now listen well to me; your honest goold could do that, if you an' Moya Moore was once man an' wife; ay, an' more than that; stock the farum, too, afther

clearin' id, an' then all would go well to the world's ind."

"Ay, ay, but this little galley, the Moya—would she be puttin' the ould hulk undher any new ordhers, short allowance o' grog, or sich like—d'ye see me, eh, shipmit?"

"Niver fear that, admiral; she wouldn't say one conthrary word to you from year's end to year's end, an' I know her well."

"No squalls, at a hand's-turn, to get ould ship on her bame's inds?"

"The dickens a squall she'd give, the crature! barrin' you gave her rason, admiral," asserted Murty; "an' you're not the man to do sich a dirty turn;—no, Moya is as quiet as the lamb—no; bud she'd mind for you, an' she'd make for you—an' she'd sing a purty little song for you at her wheel—an' you'd have a house o' your own, admiral—an' no one to cross or conthrary you—an' the stock an' the crops ud be thrivin' on the land—an', in a rasonable time, there 'ud be little weeny admirals runnin'

about your legs—an' they'd be tumblin' over head an' heels, on the flure, to divart you; an' you'd be a 'sponsible man."

"Hurrah!" cheered Terence, as the picture glowed before his ardent imagination.

"And thin let me see the one that 'ud call you an ugly ould fish, or tumble you down the hill, or put the fire to your pig's-tail, or as much as snap an eye at you, my poor ould admiral."

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" again shouted the admiral, three times distinctly, as we have noted it down,—now taking off his hat, and waving it round his head, while the deafening pitch of his voice startled the echoes in the little glen outside the house.

It was finally settled that Terence should indeed go a-wooing—by proxy, however, in the first instance. He was loth to venture, as he intimated, out of "say-room," such as he was used to, into a strange unknown harbour, without taking soundings; for there might be rocks, or sands, or breakers, a-head, enough to make

the best ship afloat go to pieces, and to baffle the steering skill of the ablest hand that ever grappled a helm or boxed a compass. In fact, Murty Meehan was deputed, and gladly accepted the commission, to break the business to Moya and her mother, while Terence O'Brien should await his return in the next public-house, administering to the thirsty wants of some of his neighbours, in return only for their decent attention to his stories of wondrous adventure on the ocean, containing many charms for them, doubtless, though deficient in that of novelty.

CHAPTER VII.

We hate getting serious to-day, but cannot now well help it; and yet we have tried hard to avoid doing so. Sitting down to this story, we made up our minds, indeed, that it should not, if possible, grow solemn from the beginning to the end of it; and now, even when it is plain, that. with close regard to truth, it must take some such a turn, in spite of us, we would fain avoid the contingency, if, we repeat, circumstances permitted our choice; so anxious are we to have it to say that we possess the talent of selecting, for once in our lives at least, as the subject of a tale, occurrences and persons always of a sunshiny character.

But human nature, we fear, is against us. The clear blue sky and the cloud of life, the sun and the shower, work alternately with each other in whatever succession of true events our experience can bring before us. And it is to be even so with our little history, henceforward. We promise, however, to stay out in the sun as often and as long as we can, and not to chill you under the cloud-shadow, or wet you with the shower, except when there is no running in-doors from the approach of either.

Moya Moore deserved the character jointly given of her by her sister Chevaun, and by her good brother-in-law, Murty Meehan. She was, indeed, an excellent-hearted girl; very pretty, too, with as tender and loving a blue eye as ever lighted up a rosy cheek. We have often paused, with others, to admire her modest beauty, and her soft, retiring manner, as she stood by one of the pillars of our market-house, with some half-dozen pairs of woollen-hose hanging over her arm, all of her own knitting—

nay, the materials of all carded and spun by herself; and we have as often thought, while engaged in our innocent studies of Moya, that the cooing, pipy murmur of voice in which she used to recommend the quality of her merchandise, must have convinced many bidders of their excellence.

But Moya Moore had been more blooming some years before our approaching introduction to her, than she is at present. Care and sorrow, and her efforts, from morning to night, to supply, with untiring industry, to her old broken-spirited parent, the comforts her age required, had lately made sad work among the roses on her cheeks. And, after all, little could she effect to soothe her mother's lot: the profits of her little household manufacture were inadequate to pay men to till the old farm, to stock it, and, above all, to clear it of the heavy arrears of rent with which it was burdened.

Murty has already hinted to his friend, the ould admiral, something of the present position

of Moya and her mother; we must be a little more particular.

Mrs. Moore had once been a bustling, consequential personage. Perhaps she used to pride herself on the station she enjoyed in the world. She had been an heiress—after the fashion following. Her father held a small, compact tract of land, but, having no male issue, no child but herself, in fact—caused her husband, when she married, to come and reside with his wife in the house in which she was born, and help him to cultivate and take care of the land, and be in every respect a son unto him—which, indeed, Daniel Moore was, until the old man died, leaving him, in right of his spouse, the envied possessor of a comfortable independence.

And still everything went on prosperously: Mrs. Moore became the mother of two sons, who in time proved industrious lads, and, directed by their father, increased the profits of the farm; and so, year after year, the heiress,

all along covered by her natal roof, saw herself and her family gain much repute in the neighbourhood. But a sorrowful reverse was doomed to her. A malignant fever broke out in her district; and, within a few weeks of each other, hurried her husband and her sons to the grave. And now, her broken-heartedness and her consternation assisting the ultimate result, the widow gradually became, first embarrassed, and then involved beyond hope of redemption. Eagerly would she have then insisted to a political economist that labour, not land, is the true source of the wealth of nations.

At the time of her first misfortunes, her daughter Chevaun had during some years been married to Murty Meehan, and her second daughter, Moya, was a child of nine or ten. At present that child is nineteen, so that for a long period poor Mrs. Moore has been vainly struggling, almost alone, still to live, and if possible die, under the roof which sheltered her father, herself, since her birth, her hus-

band, since he became such, to the day of his death, and her fine young sons, to the day of their untimely demise, also. And at last she has but one melancholy prospect before her—that of seeing herself and her innocent Moya turned out upon the world, poorer than beggars, because in debt—and the one helpless from age, and the other on account of her green youth and tender character.

As Murty Meehan crossed the farm to Mrs. Moore's house, bent upon his matrimonial diplomacy, bitterly did he lament over the face of dilapidation worn by everything around him, as well as on his path to the very door of the sad dwelling. The fences were all broken down; the land overrun with stones, weeds, thistles, and brambles; and over that part of it which had once afforded pasture to a goodly herd of cattle, and a fine flock of sheep, a single half-fed cow—a present from himself by the way—now ranged, untended and mournfully.

Nor did the once comfortable farm-house and its adjuncts present a better appearance than the land. The disjointed gate of the front yard lay in the mire. No sturdy swine grunted and lorded it over the back yard; no grand chorus of cackling geese, gobbling turkey-cocks, and quack-quack quacking ducks greeted his ears from its recesses; two or three old-maid hens alone, who, by sharing Moya's scanty meal of potatoes, just contrived to live, uttered some fretful sounds in one of the corners. One end of the barn had fallen in. The house itself was fast bending to decay and ruin. Here and there the thatch had slid off its roof, or been blown away by the winds, and was all over that greenish hue which indicates, in such material, a speedy approach to decomposition, while rank grass, moss, weeds, and furze, flourished through it. The once decent though small windows of the humble mansion were shattered, and their framework shaken. Before the door, on both

sides, lay a broken plough, a broken harrow, and the wreck of a farming cart; all had gone to pieces, in the weather, as well as from the want of an eye and a hand to keep them in repair.

We have said that Murty Meehan scanned with a feeling heart all these symptoms of distress. One thought, however, brought him comfort. The ould admiral's gold would put everything to rights. In the scattered heap of it which he had just seen on his supper-table, there was surely enough for the purpose. And deriving spirits from this reflection, Murty crossed the threshold of the house.

Moya was seated to her knitting, inside the door, when he suddenly appeared before her with the usual "God save all here." Murty never paid a visit to the widow's abode without bringing some little present, or else volunteering and performing some little piece of service: even his placid, good-natured face was ever welcome. His sister-in-law sprang up, threw

her arms round his neck, and kissed him cordially.

"A-charra-ma-chree, Moya, how is every little inch o' you?"

"Thank God, Murty, I'm as well as my heart could desire;" such was now her habitual answer, while her cheek, her eye, her very voice, contradicted her.

"An' the poor ould mother, a-chorra, how does she hould up?"

"Och, Murty, only poorly, poorly; she's making my heart to bleed for her—in good thruth she is;" and while Moya pressed the tears from her eyes with one hand, she pointed towards the widow with the other.

The old woman was seated in a far corner, brooding, as usual, over her troubles. They presented to her mind the one monotonous subject of bitter study and chagrin. She had been comfortable—she was a pauper; happy, and she was miserable; the respected mistress of a plentiful home, and she did not now know

how soon she must leave it, for ever, to die under a strange roof, or perhaps on the road-side. A plentiful home!—and now there was no butter in her dairy, no sides of bacon in her chimney, no brown loaf in her cupboard; the small vessel full of inferior potatoes, which simmered on a low fire, and a scanty allowance of milk from the ill-nourished "sthripper," presented to her by Murty Meehan, were her only food.

Seated on a very low stool, the tail of her tattered gown was turned over her head, and pinned partially round her face, as if to shut her up with her own melancholy; her knees were crippled up to her mouth—a favourite position—as we have noticed among our humbler people—of hopeless poverty; as if such a cringing and doubling of the person were meant to express the sense of self-humiliation weighing upon the heart: her fingers were dove-tailed across her knees; and with an exaggeration of the rocking movement

before noticed in her daughter Moya, during her visit to Murty Meehan, she swayed her body to and fro—the low wailing which occasionally timed the motion imparting to it a character at once wild and despairing.

"How do you come on, my poor sowl?" asked Murty Meehan, bending his gigantic figure till his head came on a level with hers, in her lowly position; and his tones expressed deep and extreme commiseration.

Startled from her wretched abstraction, she suddenly turned round, and fixed her sombre, filmy eye on his; but it was some time before she could perfectly recognise and bring to mind the features of her son-in-law.

"Murty Meehan, is that you?" she at length said; "I didn't know you at onct: the sighth o' my eyes is goin' from me—the very blessed sighth o' my eyes; yes, the way everything else is goin' from me;—husband, and sons—they're gone—gone, this many a year—paice an' comfort, house an' land—they're gone, too,

or else goin', fast, ay, fast, fast; an' may be 'tis well that the ould eyes will be fadin' too; the good Christhins may be more openhanded when they see that the widow that begs a could pee-aty from them, is blind as well as poor."

"She's frettin' herself into the grave from me, this away," said Moya, still weeping; "an' there's no use in my tellin' her that God is good, and that he never shuts one door on us, but he opens another. Mother, I'm sthrong, an' young, an' able to do for you."

"That child puts the vexation on me, Murty Meehan," resumed the peevish and therefore selfish old woman; "just listen to the words of her mouth; she goes on talkin' o' doin' for me!—does she call givin 'me half a mayle o' pee-aties doin' for me? Is she able to put her hand agin the rascal of a sheriff an' his bailiffs, an' shuv 'em from the dour? Will she stock the land, and till the land?—will she pay the black-hearted landlord his rent?—will she

keep me in the house where I was born, as I used to be kept in id? I'm not to be undher this roof another week."

"Mother, mother! don't be so cast down in yourself," comforted Murty, as Moya turned away, hopeless and pained, though not feeling offended, and weeping more than ever. "Betther times is commin'."

"Betther times! well, ay; I know that; the day I'm sent adhrift over that thrashold, the heart will burst in my body; an' then there will be betther times—in the grave: betther times, becase I can't call to mind there the times that are gone; ay, ay; I know it well; an' I'm thankful to you for your comfort, Murty."

"She's sore afflicted," whispered Moya, coming back, and wishing by her remark to soften to Murty's ear her mother's bitter and hurtful words.

"Mother, you'll want none o' the grave's comforts yet a start, plaise God; you'll be

livin' undher the roof that covers you, an' that you was born undher, this many a day to come: an' you'll be livin' undher it prosperous an' happy."

"Did you stalk over here on your long legs, Murty Meehan, thinkin' you had a witless woman, as well as a broken-hearted woman, to make your mock at? You have a house to cover you; don't jibe them that'll soon be houseless, an' that onct had a home o' plenty. Go to your awn place, Murty Meehan, an' laive me to myself; go to your awn place, an' take your gorsoon on your knee, an' promise him a coach an' four horses, if he stops cryin'; but don't bring sich stories to the ould widow in her misfortunes."

"Och, mother, mother!" gently remonstrated Moya; "Murty 'ud never come to your hearth-stone to mock you."

"Mother, the colleen says the thruth," blandly continued Murty; "I was never given to say or to do what 'ud give pain to the heart

of a sthranger, not to talk o' you; an' I tell you again, an' I know what I'm sayin', that you'll live in the ould house to the ind o' your days, asy, an' comfortable, an' happy, if you like."

Moya had begun to listen to Murty with a beating heart; now she looked at him in breathless interest. The widow relaxed her clasped fingers from her knees, put back, with one hand, the neglected grey hairs from her face, and rested the palm of the other on her low stool, that so she might enable herself to turn round, and gaze her full wonder into the speaker's face. Her fluent words ceased.

"First an' foremost," Murty went on, "you don't owe a *laffina* o' rint in the world wide, this blessed moment! there's the landlord's resate in full, to the prasant day." He laid it on her knees. "An' will you b'lieve me now, mother dear?"

Moya, uttering a low scream of joy, suddenly knelt, clasping her hands, looking up-

ward, and moving her lips in prayer. The aged woman snatched up the paper, started on her feet, flung back the gown which had been hooded round her head, tottered to the rush-light in the middle of the floor, read the writing, and saw there was no mockery.

"May the ould widow's blessin's," she began, also kneeling, "fall in a plentiful shower on the head that—that——" she could not go on; a passion of tears interrupted her speech. Mary piously finished for her the intended blessing, adding, "An' mine with it, our Father in heaven! mine—the blessin' o' the poor widow's orphan child on whoever it is, that takes my mother out of her sore throuble, this holy and blessed night!" She then arose to assist her parent off the floor to her low stool again.

"'Tis more nor two years," resumed Mrs. Moore, wiping with her apron the plentiful moisture from her eyes and her wrinkles, "more nor two years since a tear fell from

me; my heart was crusted over wid bitterness, like the wather when the frost is upon id: an' I'm cryin' now becase the thaw is come to me; don't be afeard, Moya; don't let it throuble you; nor you, Murty, asthone; it's the joy makes me cry, an' it will do me good."

For some time the certain tidings that she was not to be turned out of her house—the home of her fathers, of her youth, of her womanhood, and of her matronly consequence—were sufficient tidings for the widow Moore; and as she professed to receive relief from her tears, Murty allowed her to indulge them without interruption.

Moya also experienced a temporary abstraction of joy, though not of a nature so selfish as that indulged in by her mother; in fact, her heart thrilled with pleasure, because her mother's had been comforted. Both, however, awakened, at length, to the interest of the new question—how had Murty obtained the money to pay their rent?

"Sit where you are, mother, quiet an' asy, an' I'll soon tell you the whole story. The body that gave me the money to free you o' the landlord won't stop his hand there. He'll stock the farum for you; an' he'll make the ould land and the ould place to look the same it onct looked for you; an' he'll come an' live undher the same roof wid you; an' he'll be a son in your ould days to you; an' I'll let you call me a borne gandher, if he doesn't turn out to be a good son, into the bargain."

"Yes, Murty; yes, avich," gasped Moya, changing colour, in an ill-boding, and fidgeting with her fingers.

"An', to ind all, in one word, he'll just marry wid my little Moya, here; an' if he doesn't make mooch iv her, why I'm asthray intirely."

Moya, feeling herself growing weak, slid down quietly in a sitting position, her face now very pale, and her eyes staring at Murty.

"Who is he, Murty dear?" she asked in a whisper scarcely audible.

"Yes, Murty, aroon; what name is on the gorsoon?" echoed her mother.

"Gorsoon?" questioned Murty, with an innocent smile—that is, with a smile meant to be received as quite innocent, though it really did not, so much as his usual ones, partake of that honourable character; "Gorsoon! why, then, barrin' he's a gorsoon bee raison iv his bein' a bachelor boy, I'm thinkin' it's time for him to be a man at the prasent day; sure, ye both know Terry O'Brien, the—the——" Murty hesitated.

Moya started into an expression which it would be difficult to define, as, with the slightest possible approach to impatience, she resumed, "Terry—Terry O'Brien, the——the what?"

"The — the — admiral," answered Murty, at last, in a hurry. He could not, on the

present occasion, bring himself to honour Terence with his usual title in full.

Moya's figure suddenly sank lower as she sat, and with clasped hands, and a face of utter misery, she looked towards her mother. Neither that good woman nor Murty Meehan, however, noticed or understood the present meaning of her manner and features.

"Terry O'Brien, the *ould* admiral?" queried Mrs. Moore, very slowly, supplying Murty's delicate omission; and it half seemed that even her selfishness could not at once reconcile her to poor Terence as a husband for her daughter.

Murty went on—"Call him bee whatever other names ye plaise, Terry O'Brien is the man; a power o' the goold cum to him, from his ould ship, for prize money, bee manes iv a bit o' writin' that one poor Murty Meehan, a neighbour, dhrew up for him; an' we all knew he had a thrifle o' the guinieas aforehand, along wid id; an' every *laffina* iv id all, that's left

afther payin' the landlord, he'll pelt into little Moya's lap, to do what she likes wid id. There's no denyin' that Moya might get a younger boy, an' maybe a one more likely an' comely to look at; bud would he bring her or you, mother, out o' the throuble that's on ye?—would he rise up all our heads again, an' bring back the ould times?—an' salvation to my sowl, if there's a more *laucky* crature than my poor Terry walkin' Ireland's ground. He'll be like a little dog about the house; he'll do everything ye bid him do; Moya 'll be his Queen o' the May; an' if 'tis a thing that he's a taste ould, why, he's hearty; an' not bad to look at, whin you come used to him."

Moya still continued silent, her looks fixed on her mother, as a culprit at the bar of justice, on trial for his life, watches the face of the foreman of the jury, returning into court, with his brethren, after having agreed upon a verdict. She soon knew her doom.

"Moya won't say the 'No,'" resumed the

old woman; "Moya always cared for her mother, an' she won't be the cause of her dyin' broken-hearted at last; Moya wouldn't put the mother's blessin' from her."

The young girl drew in her breath, making a slight hissing sound.

"I tell you again, Murty Meehan, if id came to pass that I was thrust over that dour-stone, I'd lay down my head on its threshold an' die; and Moya wouldn't send her father's widow an' her own mother out o' the world that way."

A visible shudder now ran through Moya's frame, but again her agitation was unnoticed.

The garrulous Mrs. Moore went on in great glee—"No, no, Moya would not; an' so, all will be as it used to be agin, plaise God: the flitches will be in the chimbly agin; the cows will come to the baun, looin' to be milked, agin; we'll have the sheep-shearin' agin; an' the churn-dash will be goin' bee the fire; we'll have our little parlour nate an' purty again;

whin the lark is singin' above our heads, in the mornin', we'll ramble through the green fields, to look at the lambs sportin' and to hear the ewes blaitin' to 'em; there will be nothin', widin' an' widout, but pace, an' plenty, an' happiness, an' heart's rest.—O! the praises be given above!—och! 'tis a blessin' that Moya is bringin' on herself an' me!—she was always good; the widow's comfort in all her sore throubles an' misfort'ns: an' now she'll be the manes o' lettin' me die undher the roof where I first saw the light; och, the blessings on my Moya! Come an' give the ould mother one kiss, my Moya-bawn!—come, a-cushla!"

Mechanically, and with some difficulty in her motions, Moya arose from her crouching seat on the floor, and went to obey her mother's commands; and the lips she touched to those of the old woman were white and cold.

"The mother's blessin' be upon your head, my own chorra machree," added the good dame, laying her hands on Moya's head, after

embracing her; "but is id shiverin' wid the could you are?"

Murty Meehan also noticed, at last, the girl's wretched appearance and manner: but accounted for them on the grounds of maidenly surprise and bashfulness. He was not quite so much in Moya's confidence as was his worthy spouse. And after some further conversation between him and Mrs. Moore, honest Murty took his leave, convincing himself—though in the teeth of a lurking little suspicion to the contrary—that he had acted as a dutiful son-in-law and an affectionate brother-in-law ought to have done. All along, doubtless, he had admitted to himself—as, indeed, we have heard him acknowledge to the girl's face—that Moya might very naturally prefer a younger and a sprucer bridegroom; and yet was it Murty's serious conviction that, by the proposed match, he consulted her personal happiness as well as her worldly advantage; so very high was his opinion of the ould admiral.

As to the widow Moore, her sudden change, wrought by the joyous prospect thus suddenly opened to her, from moping despair to brisk good spirits, was truly surprising. She seemed to have regained the vigour of her early days. So soon as Murty had departed, she became wordy and bustling to excess, to the almost unconscious eyes and ears of her still silent child. She took, indeed, Moya with her through the house, and, late as it was, through the yards and outbuildings, to point out the repairs and improvements which were to be immediately undertaken, by means of the fortune so providentially supplied to them. Seated within doors again, she ran over the arrangements for the wedding-feast; numbered the dishes to be placed on the tables; selected the guests; and even prescribed the fashion, colours, and quality of the bride's wedding garments. Moya only felt that a word of dissent or discouragement, on her part, to all this selfish and vain anticipation, would break her

mother's heart, and deprive her of her mother's dying blessing, and she was still and still silent.

At length, the widow retired to bed. Even after she had lain down, Moya sat enduring her loquacious and—to the poor girl—terrible visions of happiness and importance in the world. Sleep fell on her; Moya watched till she was sure her mother slumbered soundly, and then she stole on tiptoe to the door of the house, raised its latch quietly, stept out, closed the door again, ran down the slope of a hill, gained the edge of the little stream that whimpered at its foot, cast herself sitting there; and now, as she wrung her hands in agony, the sobs and the tears which had been so long kept in, swelled through the echoing nooks of the lonesome spot around her, and pattered into the shallow water over which she bent.

And "Oh!" she cried, "may the Lord of heaven have pity on me this black night! The heart's-rest my mother spoke of—the heart's-

rest! Oh, I was only poor before—poor, and fatherless, and brotherless—but now! now! now!"—she wrung her hands with increased energy and bitterness—"the fortune! och, yes! the fortune to be sure! But isn't there *another* would do the same for my mother an' me, only he's poor, poor, poor like ourselves? Mother, it will cost me dear to keep your last blessin' on my head, an' to laive you undher the roof-three of your father's house! Mother, mother, it would break your heart to be turned out o' that house, an' it will break mine to keep you in id! Oh! the Lord look down on me! Oh! I am the most miserable crature on the face of the earth this moment! Oh! what, what is to become of me?"

Thus did Moya make her moan, while the running stream that received and bore away her tears, did not flow on with her young sorrows too. The grey morning began to break before she became alive to a necessity for calming herself. Then, however, amid continued sobs

which almost rent her bosom, she tried to cool and wash away the tears from her burning eyes; and, at length, walked up the hill to the house, slowly and heavily, that she might be in time for her mother's wakening hour, and take her place to listen to renewed descriptions of the happiness in store for her.

CHAPTER VIII.

After spending, as a matter of etiquette—indeed, almost of necessity after prize money—two or three days and nights at the alehouse, drinking King George's health, and confusion to all his enemies, but particularly to his French ones, Terence O'Brien steered up to the widow Moore's abode, to promote in person his matrimonial suit.

To this step he had been induced principally by Murty Meehan's frequent representations of its being indispensable in the eyes of all "dacent neighbours of people, livin' on firrum land;" for Terence's own part, he saw no use

in jawing over the business: it wasn't "say-man-like." When "boord ould ship," they always cleared for action without any such palaver. So soon as mother Moore chose to give the word, he was ready to come to close quarters, and what else could be required of him? In boarding an enemy, who ever thought of speaking her fair? What was a broadside for, but to bring her to her senses, without wasting a word?

With his usual kind consideration, Murty Meehan laboured to convince the admiral that there was no parallel between the present proposed encounter and that of an action at sea; that, in fact and truth, Moya Moore was no enemy of his, nor he an enemy to her; but that, on the contrary, they were both good friends already, and that the object in view was to make them the best and closest friends in the world.

"We cruize a-head together, then, my hearty—the Murty and the Terry alongside—eh?"

"Bee all manes, admiral:" and, accordingly, they proceeded to Mrs. Moore's together.

Upon this occasion the admiral looked as well as his personal accidents could permit. From top to toe, he wore a new suit, perfectly in sailor trim. Blue jacket, blue trousers, scarlet waistcoat, white stockings, and single-soled pumps. His grey hairs were smoothed backward from either side of his forehead, his new furry hat hung towards one ear, his pig-tail was freshly bound and ribboned, and around his throat he had coiled a flaming silk handkerchief, which

"Waved like a meteor in the troubled air."

Before the inmates of the house could see him, his stormy "Ould ship a-hoy!" sounded in their ears from the middle of the ascent to their threshold. At the hail, Moya, who had been moping about the floor, sank on a seat in a dark and damp corner. The widow, on the contrary, bounded from her stool, adjusted her attire, hastened to the open door-way, and

there stood with a preparatory face and air expressive of much welcome and cordiality. And there did the admiral first address her.

"Aha, ould frigate! all right an' tight aboord—eh?"

"He's axin' you, mother," said Murty Meehan, in an 'aside,' as Mrs. Moore's features began to wear a very puzzled expression, "he's axin' you, in his say gibberish, how is all in the house."

"Why, then, we're brave an' hearty, thank God, an' to yourself, sir, for the axin'," answered the dame, addressing Terence; "an' glad in the heart to see you undher our poor roof."

"Splice timbers, here, my ould frigate."

The widow Moore was again at a loss to comprehend the admiral's phrase, but the action accompanying his words, proved sufficiently intelligible to her. Terence jerked forward his one hand; she advanced one of her's to meet it; and then he set to work at her

arm, along with that hand, as if he had been at the pump, aboard, five feet of water in the hold. The old woman's joints were nearly dislocated in their sockets; and the struggle of her heart to keep in screams expressive of her torture, and of her countenance, to keep up a show of good-humour, became pitiable. Her son-in-law elect went on:

"I'll tell you a piece of my mind, now, misthress. I hate jawin'. A sayman isn't never used to id. He laives id to your land-loobers an' the parley-wows. But never mind for all that; he'll do his duty widout id as long a plank of him sticks together. An' now, agin, here's a bit o' log, d'ye see me. Murty Meehan, my jolly shipmit here, he cruised a start round your port t'other night to take soundin's: an' he spoke wid you, an' so you know our present tack. See here—I'll put the rhino aboord—I'll work ould ship for you, here, as well as one timber can do id, hearty and saymanlike—I'll tug when you cry, 'yee-ho!'—I'll keep the

tackle thrue, and the canvass fair to the breeze. Maybe I'd thry my loock at the helm, off and on—but I'm no great hand at that part o' ship's work, an' I tell you so, plump, afore we weigh anchor. An' that's all I've got to palaver about. If it's a bargain for the voyage, I'm aboord; if not, only say the word, an' I'm off on the ould coorse—eh, my ould frigate?"

Again, Mrs. Moore wot not what to say, for again she wot not what had been said to her. She believed, however, that, notwithstanding the pumping she had undergone, she was still called on to manifest great content and satisfaction. So, as the best thing to be thought of, she bobbed many curtsies. But, again, Murty Meehan considerately acted as interpreter between her and what he was pleased to call, in his own pride of knowledge of the English language, the "say-gibberish" of his friend.

"It's what he's demandin' o' you now, mother, is—would you be plaised wid him, goold an' all, for a husband for the collein?"

"An' troth, an' why not? An' sure we'll do our endayvour to make the place an' the house agreeable an' comfortable to him, an' to any friend of his," she replied; "paice and plenty' widin an' widout; *laucky* times, an' happiness *galore*."

"But mind, misthress—mind one thing; sayman's allowance o' grog, an' no stintin'."

Murty promised there should be no stint; he was supported, upon explanation, by Mrs. Moore; and matters being so far understood, Terence again "spliced timbers" with the ould frigate, and a second time wrought so hard, that, in order to conceal her real feelings, she forced herself into an affected burst of laughter, while the sourness of her aspect plainly denoted that a hearty fit of crying would have more honestly expressed her sensations, and the state of her temper.

"Sink my hulk to ould Davy!" then bellowed the admiral. "Where's the little craft I'm to join company with? Ahoy, there!"

as he discovered Moya in her dark corner: "alongside here! alongside, my little schooner!" and he seized her hand, and tugged her into the middle of the apartment. "What cheer, now, what cheer? eh? scuttle me, but her canvass shivers in the breeze. But cheer up, cheer up; 'twill right soon—eh? Shiver my timbers, but you *are* a thrim little vessel—prize for an admiral; and if the ould jolly boy doesn't fight, broadside to broadside, for you, against any seventy-four that ever swum, may he be sent undher hatches for a skulker! a buss, my little hearty, an' all's settled." And before the terrified Moya could recede from his advance, he snatched the favour he had proposed. "My hulk to splinters, shipmit!" addressing Murty Meehan, "but she's a well-built little vessel—ain't she? Lookee; painted, pinnace-like, d'ye see me, and right well rigged from stem to stern; don't you shiver so, my hearty; cheer up, I say; I never knew a land-jack that war'n't afeared o'

salt wather, at the settin' out; but you'll not be long before the wind till you bear a hand bravely; I know it—so cheer up." The ould admiral again saluted his bride; and Moya, then pulling herself somewhat free of his gripe, retreated to her corner.

Her mother next boarded the sayman, engaging him in a discussion of all her plans of improvement and management in the house and on the farm. For a short time he listened to her with some little seeming attention; but, fatigued with her "jaw," suddenly bounced off his seat, told her that he left the whole business of the outfit to his shipmate and herself, snatched a parting *bonbouche* from his little pinnace, and scudded away, full before the wind.

Terence felt perfectly satisfied with the state of affairs. All was now settled, and so no be more talk about it. Mrs. Moore could not smoother nor kinder. Moya seemed shy, to be sure; but, as he had intimated to her, so were,

according to his recollections and experience, all fresh-water jacks at the first sight of the sea. She had not repulsed him—she had not said "No;" and, seeing that she was gifted with a tongue in her head, such must have been the case did she really dislike the proposed "cruise in company." On board the ould Vincent all his life long, his shipmates and he had always spoken their minds honestly to each other, and he had no other rule of judging of people's opinions, and he would have none. No meant no, and yes meant yes; or, what was even better, for it saved jaw, if you asked a "shipmit" will you? and he said neither yes nor no, but just held his tongue, and at the same time did not knock you down, or give any similar indication of dissent, why, you had an answer much plainer than all the languages in the world could convey it, to the effect of—"To be sure I will." So that our honest admiral left the widow Moore's "ould ship," experiencing pretty nearly the same sensations he used to

feel, when about to make a fresh cruise, after riding some time at anchor—careless and hearty, and his spirits up, from an undefined hope of something novel about to happen to him.

How often, with the best intentions in the world, do the best people in the world go near to break the hearts of the unhappy, in an endeavour to do them good!

And why?

Because they don't, or won't, or can't, understand.

And ah! that little word "won't," contains matter for chapters upon the curious and contemptible compound of our nature, take it, upon the average, at its best——

But—"d—n your sentiment."

With all our heart. Don't be afraid, "gentle light reader."

CHAPTER IX.

The news of the intended nuptials soon spread abroad, and, among the guests selected by Mrs. Moore on the occasion, great preparations ensued to grace the widow's roof upon the appointed day; and under that roof itself a still greater bustle went on, to do honour to her invitations. Before the arrival of the priest there is something to be noticed.

The high road leading, in the district in which we find ourselves, to the principal country town, ran at the distance of about a mile at right-angles with the front of the widow Moore's dwelling. From it a *bosheen*, or narrow way,

diverged, and took a circuitous route towards the humble abode, and, by a branch-track, communicated directly with its threshold; and along this route horses and carts, or—as the primitive machines which then substituted carts were called—cars, could journey to and from market. But pedestrians chose a shorter cut to the main road, as well from her house as from other solitary dwellings near her.

Upon the night when she first became informed of Terence O'Brien's proposal of marriage, Moya Moore, as we are aware, ran down a slope from her mother's door to the side of a little stream, there to vent her feeling in solitude. This stream, having its source among high hills in the recesses of the country, had, before Moya arrived at its banks on that spot, passed close by Murty Meehan's cabin, about half a mile up from her, and continued to flow on from her feet to the high-road already spoken of, which it crossed; thence pursuing its fated course to the river, with which it

soon became confounded. While sketching, at the opening of our story, Murty Meehan's residence, and its surrounding features, we believe we hinted that the tiny rivulet ran a very zig-zag race near to his threshold; and we have now to say that it did the same thing all the way it had to run: its aberrations being caused by the nature of the ground, through which, like a dog on a scent, it seemed to nose its way: for sometimes the banks misdirected it to the right, sometimes to the left: now in an obtuse angle, now almost in a right angle—so that, at every twist, it was almost shut up among puzzling inequalities, in one little solitude or another, from all sight of whence it had come, or whither it was to go: and each of those lonely spots along its course was differently characterized from the other. Now the little active stream found itself safely rippling over smooth sand or pebbles, then among sinkings or swellings of cultivated fields:

now stealing amid rushes, duck-leaves and sedge—through lumpish land, neglected or naturally barren; and anon it chafed, and beaded, and sometimes grew important enough to foam through a jumbled group of rocks and stones, great and small, doing its best to escape from the fairy fastness, and in such a hurry that you might fancy it was greatly afraid it should never be able to succeed, or else that, like a vagrant, taken up and sent back to his parish, it should at last be turned straight home again to its hilly source. Yet, crooked as was the line along its edges to the high-road, foot-passengers, thither bound from Mrs. Moore's abode, or from the residences of her neighbours, chose it in preference to the cart-way already described, for no other reason that we could ever discover, except that they found, or deemed it the pleasanter. And occasionally the path, worn by their frequent feet, crinkum-crankumed at one side of the stream, and by-

and-by at the other,—stepping-stones, placed irregularly in the water, connecting in a very slippery fashion such rambling deviations.

At the point where one of those dislocated rows of stones sent the foot-path from her edge of the brook to the opposite one, Moya Moore had sat down on the night we have mentioned; and the next night, and the next; her hot tears still making bubbles, like blisters, upon the surface of the clouded water. Girls of all degrees are, we are told, timid; and those of Moya's class in life superstitiously so; and it is therefore remarkable that in so often frequenting this lonely place, at such late hours, she did not feel uneasy under the influence of its character, nor yet on account of a time-out-of-mind story, of which it was the scene.

A story!—yes—an old and a terrible story! We cannot help it, but had better recount it in as few words as possible.

The rising ground to Moya's back, as she sat, was called "Lacken-na-Monh," or "the

Woman's Hill;" and opposite to her, at the other side of the stream, just where the pedestrian from the high-road should begin to cross it on his near approach to her mother's house, arose a huge rock of granite, streaked in a kind of deep dim colour, with a figure something like a cross: and from a murdered maiden had the hill been named; and at the foot of the pale gigantic rock she had been found dead and stiff; and the cross had been made four generations ago (though no weather could since erase it) with her blood. The unhappy girl had loved, in secret, a stranger. He prevailed on her to leave her father's home with him—she engaged to rifle, beforehand, for his advantage, her father's coffers; she kept both her promises but too well. He watched for her at night, by appointment. On her progress to him, after her elopement from her hitherto innocent dwelling, he saw her steal down the Lacken-na-Monh to the stepping-stones; he received her with extended arms:

after crossing the stones he led her apace under the ominous shadow of the pile of granite, ascertained that she came freighted with the expected booty, struck her down, followed up the blows till he had killed her, and then escaped with his prize; for all along the villain had not in the slightest degree responded to her guilty love; at her father's gold alone he had aimed; and now, that gold in his clutch, he did not want her to encumber him, or to help him to spend it.

Such was the well-accredited story connected with Moya Moore's chosen nook of solitary sorrow, and yet, as we have noticed, it had not the effect of keeping her away, under her mother's roof, or even of sending her to spend half the night amid some less celebrated scenery out of doors. Nay, respectable authorities added to the horrors of the tale we have glanced at, by asserting that, very often, under the clouds of the night, the spirit of the murdered girl might be heard

shrieking terrifically over and around the place, and sometimes seen, too, exaggerated to an unearthly size, and draped in (of course) white, upon the top, or at the base of the desecrated rock. And, again, all this seemed to make no disagreeable impression on Moya; or if, during her repeated visits to the haunted and unholy ground, natural fear did come over her recollections, either she was too much engrossed with her own grief to care about anything further that might happen to her, or she had some particular reason for braving the terrors of the spot. We believe both feelings combined to shape her conduct.

At all events, upon the third night preceding that appointed for her marriage with the ould admiral, Moya Moore was again sitting at her own edge of the stream, opposite to the "stone of the bloody cross." A smart breeze whistled along the brook, and eddied, at her back, against the "*Lacken-na-monh*;" and the stars were now hidden by stormy clouds, and now

shone free of the obstruction. But, on this occasion, Moya need not have given way, as much as upon former nights, to the supernatural terrors of a lonely woman, for she did not sit alone at the stepping-stones.

Her companion was a very young man, athletic and comely: but whatever might be the character of his brow, as stamped naturally by his dispositions, it was now dark and wrinkled. When he spoke, his accents were sometimes vehement, and sometimes they sank into a cadence of despairing entreaty. Moya's voice, in reply to him, was invariably heart-broken and wailing, and often interrupted by sobs. With his right hand he held her right hand, and his left arm passed round her waist; and often, in moments of excessive grief, the girl allowed her head to fall on his shoulder.

"No, no, I cannot pass the sthrame with you," she said, "nor stay out from my mother, even where we are, any longer; 'twas a wrong thing

for me to come to meet you, at all; for 'tis sorer to part than I thought it would be."

"Don't forsake me, Moya," replied the young man; "don't, for the Saviour's sake."

"Never lay the blame to me, gorsoon—oh! would I, would I forsake you, if I could help it?"

"Moya, if you loved me——I am ill, Moya, some way I don't know how, an' I can spake but few words to you at a time——if you loved me—if ever you loved me, you would surely help it, Moya."

"An' never say that to me, gorsoon baun, of all words out of your mouth; love you!—och, you have no rason to say id; God, who hears my prayers and sees the heart, knows you have not; feel Moya's heart, this moment, ma *bouchaleen*,*—'tis heavy—heavy; heavy like a lump o' lead; broke, I believe—broke, I hope—I hope! An' the sleep never falls on my eyes the night long; whenever I am in the bed, I sit up in id, cryin'."

* Little boy.

"Moya, ma cuishla, we won't part—we won't go from one another."

"Och, the sorrow is on my heart to know that the time for partin' has come!"

"No, no, Moya! no—it would be a desthruction to both of us."

"I know it will be the desthruction of one of us, at any rate; listen to me well, my own bouchal baun; I'm thryin' to get ready to laive the world; there's somethin' tells me that I won't live out the night that takes me from you; that the next mornin's breakin' will look down on the corpse o' Moya Moore!"

"An' you tell me to quit your side, Moya, in the same breath that tells me that! you love me as well as that, an' you bid me laive you! Cuishla, *I*'d give up house an' home, kith an' kin, land an' goold, if land an' goold were mine, for *you*."

"An' I'd do the same for you, my poor gorsoon, if so doin' only concerned mysef in this world, an' laid up no evil for me in the next;

but I wouldn't break the ould mother's heart, and arn her dyin' curse."

"Och, my own calleen! what is to become of us then? Moya, Moya, the love is on my heart for you ever since we were little childer, goin' to the school together! an' now I see that you're in want o' the pity as mooch as mysef!"

"I remember the time you spake of, well. There was a day that I climbed up an' spilt the masther's ink, an' you took the blame on yoursef, widout my knowin' id, an' you never cried when they punished you; but suffered like a stout little man for my sake; an' I call to mind when we used to come home together of an evening, an' when the rain would be fallin', you'd take off your coat to cover me, an' walk in the peltin' shower widout a tack to shelther you from id; an' I remember the singin' birds you'd bring me, and the nose-gays you'd pull for me; avoch! I remember everything—up to the very May-mornin'

whin you tould me I was your own cuishla-gal-machree; an' if I was the misthriss of a coach-an'-six to-night, not the wecniest word or deed that ever passed between us, could Moya forget, my poor bouchal baun."

"An', afther all, Moya, you talk of goin' from me?" One only idea was at present in the lad's mind, and, that one expressed, with but little variation of words, every time he spoke.

"I'm goin' from you into the grave—but then I'll die free of my mother's death, an' of my mother's curse, an' maybe God will give me a comfort in the life to come. What grieves me most of all, at present, is the knowledge that I must laive *you* broken-hearted too, for your poor Moya."

"Moya," he said trembling, while she wept and sobbed in his arms, "if things are to turn out that way, God's heavy curse on my heart, if it does *not* break!" His tears now flowed fast with hers. She started, sat erect, and looked across the stepping-stones.

"What is id?" he asked.

"Did you see nothing over the sthrame?" He answered "No." "Nor hear any noise? But there's no one to be seen now, an' nothin' to be heard but the whistlin' wind an' the runnin' wather—an' sure I was only puttin' foolish things into my own mind——" Again her head rested on his shoulder, as, amid tears and sobs, scarcely lessened or interrupted by her momentary fright, she uttered, in a very low voice, the young man's name: and when he replied, she went on.

"You know the berrin'-place of my unfortunate people, my poor gorsoon? Yes, you do—only you'll know id betther when you follow another coffin there: I remember well you walked afther my father's, and afther my two brothers' coffins, to it; so you'll come there of a Sunday; an' you'll kneel down, bare-headed, on a new-made grave, an'——"

"Cuishla! cuishla! stop them words—I won't listen to them! an' I won't part you,

neither! I can't part you! never will I part you! My father is poor, and has nothing to give me; but I'm an able boy; I can go through a day's work with any other that ever held a plough: I'll take a bit o' ground; I'll dig on it; we'll build a little cabin on it; I'll labour in our little garden afther the day's work for the farmers, and afore the day's work—afore the sun rises, an' long afther the sun goes down; an' I'll work so well for others, as well as for you, that the rich farmers will come to seek me out, and to hire me; I'll keep up your mother an' yourself; an' if there's a fort'n to be made on Ireland's ground, or a penny, I'll arn it for my colleen; an' we'll be happy together; happy, though not very rich; but to part you! sittin' here wid you to-night, an' my arms about you—to talk of partin' from you! Moya, I say again, we'll never part."

"Avoch! many's the time my own thaights an' my own heart brought before me the bit o' land, an' the little cabin, an' the little garden,

an' everything you spake of—ay, an' more: I seen my own self helpin' you in the garden, or makin' or mendin' for you at the cabin dour; or busy about the fluer, inside, to be ready for your comin' home in the evening: but id was all a dhrame! an empty dhrame, though a very happy one! as empty as the wind that whistles on the hill behind us, an' as unthrue as that the stars are dancin' in that wather, though *that* seems thrue enough too. No, bouchaleen. The mother's curse, an' the mother's grave rises between us, an' opens between us! We *are* parted for ever in this world—an' may God help us both!"

"I say no, still, Moya! no no! do *you* listen to me now. We are promised to one another in the holy name, an' nobody on earth has the right to stand between us!"

"Is id the anger is comin' upon you, bouchal baun?" she asked.

His looks and accents, as well as his words, told that a change began to work within him.

"An' why shouldn't the anger come on me, if id did come?—why should your mother desthroy us both for the sake of a wasteful dinner or a new gownd, or a curtshy an' a 'God save you ma'am?'—us—two young people in the mornin' of our days—long life an' many hopes before us—cover my Moya undher the sod o' the grave, and send me—if I didn't soon lie by her side—send me, a mad creature, over the face o' the earth, killin', I believe, any live thing that would stand up afore me. By the night that's above our heads, I'll not go from you, Moya! There's no one, I say, has the right over you but myself, an' I hould you close—an' I will hould you close!"

"Och, bauchal ma-chree! don't say them cross words to me, an' don't press me so hard—would you hurt me, as well as frighten me, now?—take away your hands, an' let me be goin' home to my mother, in the name o' God."

"Home you'll not go, Moya—never!"

Still holding her in his arms, he suddenly started up with the terrified girl, bore her rapidly across the stepping-stones, laid her at the base of the granite rock, and cast himself by her side.

"What did you bring me here for, ma bouchal?" she whispered, standing up, as well as she was able, after a shrinking glance around, which informed her where she was. He did not answer; but she saw him turn upon his breast, and cover his face with his hands, while his limbs shook or started, and deep sounds of great passion escaped him. Ay, the master-fit was upon him. "Now, my poor boy, you frighten me more and more—the good night to you, for I must——"

He again interrupted her, starting up to her side, and clasping her wildly—"No, Moya, no; —not the good night!—no, no!"—and amid showering tears and choking sobs, he impressed upon her lips and cheek kiss after kiss, in rapid succession. Moya was unable to strug-

gle against his strength and blind impetuosity.

"Free me," she could only say, in a low voice, "free me; an' tell me, I ask you again, why have you brought me to this evil spot?"

His paroxysm grew less: now, in his turn, his head fell on her shoulder; and, though he still held her, his grasp relaxed as he at length answered—"I don't know why, Moya: I can't tell you why; it has gone out of my mind, I believe, if ever it was in id; or I brought you here only to bring you somewhere—no matter where—with me, may be—yes, that's the thruth."

"Let us quit it, then: 'twas here Nora Grace lost her life; an' they say that when two thrue lovers stand together near this stone, in the night time, bad fortune is in the path of one o' them, or both o' them—come."

"Yes, so they say; an' we are two thrue lovers—an' we are stannin' near the stone—an' the sayin' will turn out to be a right sayin', if you don't hindher it, Moya."

Silence ensued, while, in the imperfect light, she endeavoured to read the meaning of the young man's features. "Moya," he resumed, in a broken hoarse tone.

"What is id?" she asked, ill at ease, and speaking with difficulty.

"Will you come your ways with me, and be my own Moya?"

"Where with you, bouchaleen? where could we go together?"

"Anywhere that gives our heads a shelter—there can be love anywhere."

"O bouchal, bouchal! you will let me home to the poor ould mother, an' heaven will have a blessin' in store for you."

"I give you the warnin', Moya—don't say the no to me, this night."

"An' well you know I wouldn't, cuishla, if the mother's death an' the mother's curse were not in our road afore us!"

"Moya, you must, or——"

"Or what?—why do you stop? Is it hurt or harm you'd put on your own poor Moya?"

"No!" he roared out, stamping on the sward; "No!—there!—I free you!—I take my arms from around you! Go your ways, now, to your mother, if you like!—only listen to me first. Listen well to me. By the cross o' blood on this stone——" He was stepping closer to the rock, his hand raised.

Moya interrupted his words, crying loudly, "Don't lay your hand on id, to swear by it!—don't touch it!"

"By the cross o' blood on this stone," he repeated, slapping his palm against it so smartly that the little solitude rang to the sound he produced by the action.

Moya flew after him, tore away his hand, flung herself on his neck, and after glancing around her, much terrified, and in great apprehension, whispered, "An oath was swore, afore now, on that cross, an' the man that swore it was forced to keep it! It became his fate to keep it, though he grew sorry for takin' id, and wanted not to do what it bound him to do!—so do it,

bouchal-baun, don't swear the oath, but come out of this unlucky place, at this unlucky hour —come, we'll talk more goin' back the way towards the house—come, a-grawgal machree!"

She saluted his cheek entreatingly. But her moody lover was not to be shaken, in his present purpose at least. He swore the oath. A certain terror-moving ballad had been, if we remember aright, written about the time of which we speak, but was certainly unknown to the rustic lad; and yet his oath contained a threat very similar to that used by "a warrior so bold" to "a virgin so bright." "By that cross," said he, "I swear that if you marry any man but me, Moya Moore, I will take my own life on the sod where we stand; and, if ever a departed soul came back to this world, I swear that my ghost will be seen at your wedding-supper. That's my oath; and half of it I'll keep, as sure as the stars are twinklin' above us, and the other half too, if I can."

The Lord preserve us!" said Moya. "O

bouchal, you know that a bad spirit has power in this place, an' now hears your oath."

"Then let the bad spirit be a witness for me."

The young man yelled aloud this raving speech, and as fearful a yell as his own replied to him; while, to one side of the granite rock appeared, elevated from the ground, a whitish form, vaguely resembling the human shape, but, to Moya's terrified glance, wavering, as if it were disjointed—nay, as she afterwards averred, headless, and

"Was so thin and transparent to view,
You might have seen the moon shine through."

Moya instantly disengaged herself from her lover, and with a shriek, which produced a second yell all around her and above her, darted across the stepping-stones of the stream, ran up the Lacken-na-monh, gained her mother's door, burst it open, and, one step beyond its threshold, fainted, and sank down, "a weary weight." It was not of her lover she was then

afraid—nay, in her wild race, she did not even think of him; and he, daring as had hitherto been his words towards the "bad spirit," and all-engrossed as he had seemed with the idea of losing his mistress, became even sooner than Moya, a victim to his unspeakable fears, falling, the instant she left his side, senseless and motionless at the base of the "Rock of the Bloody Cross."

And now we have placed ourselves in a dilemma which produces some fear, though not of the ghost, for ourselves. Be lenient to us, O gentlest of readers! while, on a fresh page, we afford ourselves breathing time, to deprecate thy offended dignity.

CHAPTER X.

DEAREST reader, there was———But how can we bring ourselves to say the words? to shape them so as that the avowal they must contain shall meet thy severe eye in the form best calculated to win thy forgiveness?

Hast thou ever, when a school-boy, been called in from the play-ground to account, before thy master's face, for some abominable act of riotousness, observed by him while haply taking his breakfast at a—by thee—forgotten window? In similar feelings to those thou mayest have experienced on such an occasion, do we now hang down our head before thee

——. And yet, dearest reader, why should we hang down our head? Thou mayest complain, doubtless, when the murder is out—as out it must surely come—that we have been guilty of an unwarrantable imposition upon thy good sense, or have descended into clap-trap to produce, for an instant, "a thrilling interest," or brought so closely together the extremes of the pathos and the bathos, or of the picturesque and the burlesque, or of the plausible and the ridiculous, that the contact is insufferable—is—in one damning word, is "in bad taste." Some of this, or all of this, thou mayest say; but could we have avoided the plain truth, for the mere purpose of writing on, according to the best approved rules of poetical propriety? That is our first point of defence. Our next is a solemn declaration that we never intended to impose on your sense, good, bad, or indifferent, as it may be, but merely to give you a faithful account, just as we got it ourselves, of how poor little Moya Moore and her athletic lover were

imposed upon, in a state of feeling which left *them*, at least, few claims, for the time, to sense or rationality of any kind. Thirdly, we plead an inherent, hearty, healthy, abhorrence of claptrap. Fourthly, we beg to ask thee, do not such extremes as thou wouldst object to, sometimes, nay often, meet, in the quick succession and incongruous linking together of the most real events of this strange life. Hast thou never known pathos whine itself down into a provocation to its own laughter? or the absurd, in some curious, whimsical, arabesque way, dovetail itself, in any instance, with the awful?

"For our own parts, we know of an elopement which, had it taken place, must have left to the world's pity—that is, scorn—a father and his six legal sons and daughters—hindered, and for ever hushed up, by a noise heard by the lady in her dressing-room, as she was putting on her bonnet, in the dark, to steal down the back stairs, because she believed it to be a

supernatural noise—a warning, sent to awaken her conscience, (or else her husband:) and it proved, after all, to be caused only by a mouse gnawing at her rouge-box. We know of another proposed elopement—a less improper one—one, in fact, between two devoted lovers, also frustrated by the sudden appearance in their path of a very harmless poor fellow, Billy Taylor by name, who could never have dreamed of intercepting them or pursuing them; but who was so generally voted a pest in conversation, that, appear wherever or whenever he did, merely in the hope of addressing a word to his fellow-creatures, the established usage was for all who saw him approach to turn their backs, and crying out, "But here's Billy Taylor!" run away from him; and so it happened in the case of the lovers we speak of; they, too, fled from Billy, retracing a good portion of the road they had come from the house of the lady's father to their carriage, until they ran plump against that very latter named gentleman, so

that the lady was taken home again, and locked up. Nay—we have heard of a downright murderer frightened away from his victim's throat by the entrance upon the midnight scene of a witness in the shape only of a little black terrier. But why, dearest reader, overpower thee with pleas in extenuation of the admission we are about to make? To the following instance of a running-in upon one another, and a blurring together of the very distinct lines of solemn and absurd, we were witnesses.

Late upon a winter's evening a maiden lady was alluding, in her niece's presence, as well as ours, to an early attachment, gloomed for ever by the death of her lover. After his death, his spirit appeared to her, and she went on, bringing before us, with much effect, the appalling circumstance, when suddenly her nervous niece, strangely—and for ourselves laughably, though for herself, painfully excited—suddenly sprang from her chair, just at the spirit's appearance, and, with a sharp, and, we thought, spiteful tap

of her extended palm, broke the spectacles on her aunt's respected nose into shivers.

And so, dearest reader, hoping to have now prepared thee, somehow or other—though we are not sure exactly how—mercifully to hear us, we at length venture to say out in full——

There was no apparition of a murdered maiden at the granite rock.

True, we have asserted that the impertinent thing

> "Was so thin and transparent to view,
> You might have seen the moon shine through."

And so you might,—(that is, had the moon been in the sky,)—and no wonder, when, after Moya had fled, and her cowardly companion had dropped senseless at the sight, old Terence O'Brien moved two or three paces from the rock's side, and stood over the latter, still yelling, and waving on the top of his stick a new white muslin dress, which he had gone to the market-town to purchase for Moya, and which he meant her to wear on her marriage-day.

And—"Ahoy!" still bellowed Terence, stirring with his foot his prostrate rival—"Ahoy, you loober! take a white saymew in the offing, for a seventy-four? but you're only fit to be a parley-woo, an' not a heart-o'-oak British sayman! An', shiver my hulk, but 'tis to ould Davy he's gone, sure enough, I believe!"

He again stirred the lad, and soon saw him jump up, however; and then ensued some stormy discourse between them.

CHAPTER XI.

The wedding evening came, with all its guests, and all its bustle of preparation to receive them. There were flesh-pots boiling, and spits turning, and servants and helpers, hired and volunteers, toiling before the great fires, at the pots and at the spits; everything and everybody under the superintendence of the widow Moore, now fully reinstated in her former responsibility and importance of character. In the little parlour, alone, two pipers blew away in rivalry, until the perspiration teemed from their foreheads; while, at some distance, in the barn or banquet-hall, three other professors of the same musical

instrument surpassed them, if possible, in zeal and melody; and parlour and barn were crowded with youthful visitors, footing it heartily to their strains, while the elderly and the old looked on; it seemed as if the national sport, pursued to its utmost, were to give a keener appetite for the viands in preparation for supper.

It is etiquette at bridals such as the present one in Ireland, that if the bridegroom does not happen to be, by nature, a very shame-faced, modest person, he should do all in his power to enact that character—to

"Assume a virtue if he have it not."

In fact, he ought not, and in all proper respectable cases he does not, make his appearance before the overwhelming crowd of company, until the wedding-feast is despatched, the very bride-cake cut up, and the very ceremony, which cannot well dispense with him, waiting his presence.

All this had Murty Meehan earnestly and often represented to his friend, Terence O'Brien,

but with little effect. The ould admiral, with one of his usual oaths, swore that he was "commodore aboard;" and his deck he would walk, fore and aft, to see that all was trim and tight, and ready for action, upon the eve of so momentous an engagement. So here and there and everywhere he pushed and strided among his guests, or, as he called them, "his crew," commanding and ordering—few of his orders understood, by the way—as if he had indeed received an admiralty-commission to bandy them about. And Terence was met upon all hands with large and good-natured allowances for his departure from the more "christhen-like" usage of bridegrooms, his ocean-life and habits being generally taken into consideration; while among every group, and in every corner, his outlandish phraseology occasioned infinite mirth. And he, in turn, took the laughter of his crew in good part, excusing its want of discipline, and of respect to a commander, because of the "jovialthry" of the occasion; and it was only with a

pleasant bluffness that he threatened to "mast-head," or to put them all into bilboes.

Terence was, above every thing, delighted with the great ranges of tables in the barn, and when they became properly freighted with the great, the enormous heaps of food, which they were just able, and no more, to support. And when all was ready, the ould admiral placed one of his pipers on a barrel, at the head of the feast, dubbed him boatswain, and commanded him to pipe all hands aboard, instructing him to use no variety of notes on the occasion, but to allow his chanter to perform a solo, to the utmost of its power; which it did, keeping up one unbroken monotonous scream, until the guests had taken their places.

If, as we have noticed is customary, the bridegroom at an Irish country wedding is expected to demean himself modestly, much more, with the exception of his absence from the banquet, is anticipated of the bride. Retiring, silent, passive, abstracted, and, in consideration

of her approaching separation from her parents, or other friends, somewhat sorrowful she must be. And, at these nuptials, retiring, silent, passive, abstracted, and sorrowful, was Moya Moore; and sometimes more besides. Her abstraction seemed a wandering of her mind in mazes of terror; her sorrow a stupified despair. From the continued expostulations of her bridesmaids, and even of her mother, she vaguely conceived that it was expected she should now and then smile; but when she made an effort to do so, her smile was dreary and chilling, and inspired no answering one on the countenances of those who beheld it. Unquestioned, Moya scarce spoke at all; and her replies to repeated interrogatories were abrupt, unmeaning, and from the point.

It became necessary that she should take her place beside the priest at the festive board; her bridesmaid was obliged to lead her out of a corner where she seemed to have become torpid; and though she sat, without resistance,

at the clergyman's right hand, it might be seen that she sat without consciousness also.

The supper went on. Moya looked around her, and, for the first time since she had entered the barn, became fully aware that it was a wedding-feast she saw, and that the guests were come. She turned suddenly to her left, fixed her eyes on the clergyman, and gazed at him for some time wildly, and in terror. But a slight relief seemed to steal over her when she was able properly to call to mind the person whom she regarded. And then, in renewed apprehensions, she turned to the individual at her right; and again recognizing in that of her bridesmaid a face different from the one she feared to behold, partial composure calmed her brow.

Still, however, as if in the almost unallayed apprehension of discovering a dreadful object, her glance roved from one to another of the guests ranged at the different tables, while her breath came short and loud, her bosom panted, and spasmy emotions worked her features. To

every question now addressed to her she answered, hastily, "Yes—yes;" and when, imputing to her maidenly feelings alone all this absence of manner, the loud laugh arose at her expense, she would sometimes echo it in a manner so hysterical that the mirthful became chided and silent.

Her plate remained untouched before her: she was pressed to eat: whispering "Thankee, thankee," she snatched up a knife and fork, and put a morsel to her mouth—but it fell untasted from her lips, as she again scrutinized the features of those around her and near her.

Her allotted husband, while seemingly all-engrossed in his attentions to his crew, had kept his eye on Moya. Now he came behind her unperceived, and laid his hand heavily on her shoulder. Without her turning to regard him, Moya suddenly put her palms over her eyes, and shrieked so piercingly, that the roof-tree of the barn rung to the sound; and then she hid her face in her bridesmaid's bosom, and

clung to her in a paroxysm of terror. The guests, after vainly glancing here and there to discover some cause for her agitation, exchanged looks and whispers with one another; and, for a moment, it was the opinion that Moya Moore was about to become a wife against the wish of her heart.

"Shiver my hulk to splinthers!" cried the admiral, in explanation; "the little pinnace is afraid o' the sarvice; but no matther for that; once launched, d'ye see me, she'll scud, sthramers mast-high."

And the former general surmise now seemed banished by the seaman's words, or else was soon forgotten in the resumed gratification of palate and stomach.

The wedding-feast was over—the grace was said—the bride-cake was sliced up by the priest; he blessed it; and then put on his stole, opened his book, and stood up; all arising with him to yield grave attention to the marriage ceremony.

Her bridesmaid led the pallid, shivering bride closer to the clergyman. The poor girl went pausing at every step, and feeling the ground with her feet, as if she were blind. And yet her wild eyes were distended beyond their usual compass. In fact, just as she suffered herself to be conducted from the table, her former unexplained terrors seemed to have become tenfold confirmed upon her, and now possessed her to extremity. At every unconscious move towards the clergyman, she glared—her head turned over her shoulder—towards the remote and half-lighted end of the barn; and although her young companion held her arm, one of Moya's fingers pointed in the direction of her look. The priest spoke to her. Without turning her eyes to him, she waved her arm as if she would silence the sound of his voice, or direct his attention to whatever it was which so strangely absorbed her own.

"The name, sir? the name?" she said, when the priest demanded her own name, "Terence

—Terence O'Brien!" in a voice of excessive fright and alarm.

"Not yet, my good young friend," half-smiled the good-humoured priest—"not yet, for a little while:" and there was a general titter at poor Moya, on account of—as was supposed—only her fidgetty mistake. She unbent her set glare, for a moment, as if to ascertain the cause of this mirth, which she felt to jar unnaturally on her present feelings; and when her eyes resumed their former bent, it became evident, from their expression, that the object which had so long fascinated them, was not now to be seen where they had observed it. Then they wandered, as had before been the case at the supper-table, from face to face, all around her.

"What is *your* name?" asked the clergyman of his old penitent, the admiral.

"Terry O'Brien, chaplain—an able-bodied sayman o' the crew i' th' ould Saint Vincent, 74."

"Take off your hat, Terence O'Brien—it is necessary you should be uncovered for this ceremony."

"My hulk to ould Davy, chaplain! I command the ship this cruize, and no capt'n never hauls down his sky-rattlin' for no loober of a chaplain—barrin' whin there's prayers on deck."

"Well, sir," again smiled the clergyman, "and we *are* going to have prayers on deck."

"Ay, ay, sir; that changes tack, d'ye see me; ay, ay, sir;" and the admiral stood uncovered.

The marriage service commenced. The icy hand of the bride was placed in that of the Jack, Moya not sensible of the circumstance; for again, through an opening in the crowded circle of guests near her, she seemed to have rediscovered, at a distance, the cause of her previous consternation, and again a finger of her disengaged hand pointed vaguely. The clergyman continued.

"Terence O'Brien, will you take Moya for your wedded wife, to——"

"Will he! to be sure he will; scuttle and sink me if he don't!" interrupted Terence.

The priest sternly commanded the admiral to abstain from all profane language, and further commanded him to answer the question properly, in the first person singular.

"That is, chaplain, I'm to make answer to your hail, yes or no, if *I* will take Moya Moore to be my wedded wife?"

"Yes, sir, or why are you here? why are we all here? Listen, man, I shall repeat the question."

"No use, chaplain, no use; jaw an' jabber for nothing, d'ye see me; I got your hail plain enough, and here's my answer—No!" in a tremendous voice, at which all started: while the guests stared, along with the priest, at the disfigured, bluff, and gruff countenance of the tar, not knowing whether to join in the grave surprise of the one, or laugh outright at what they deemed to be the sea-eccentricity of the other.

"What do you say, man?" inquired the clergyman.

"An' you didn't hear me, chaplain? Here's at you, again, thin, ould boy: may ould Davy

send a rattlin' broadside into my hulk, if the little craft ever sails undher my colours!" And before any one could recover from the grand amazement he occasioned, the ould admiral, now bellowing through his fist, went on; "Ahoy, there! namesake, ahoy! scud up, my hearty! scud up, here! aft, here, the Terry O'Brien! aft here, you loober! where are you, you skulker?" And from the quarter in which Moya had been glaring, his young nephew made his way through the crowd, she shrinking down, almost double, from his near approach.

"Think 'tis a ghost of him, my little pinnace? an' that he will bite, a-boordin' o' you, like the—parley-woos in action? Never fear, howsomever; 'tis no ghost; though he promised to turn himself into one, among the crew here to-night, for your divarshin. I say, chaplain, splice this young couple, an' be —— to you! Here, my little galley; I resign command to the land-jack; for he's the capt'n you'd rather make the voyage with, if I hard right, alongside the auld hulk-rock, t'other

night. Come, chaplain, splice 'em — splice 'em."

A word aside, and indeed something else, on the part of young Terence O'Brien, went a good way, conjointly with the admiral's assurances, in beguiling Moya of her apprehensions that she had to do only with his disembodied spirit in the present instance; and a few additional sentences made her understand the noble, the magnanimous part which the poor old sailor had adopted towards her and her lover, as soon as, from their sad conversation at the stepping-stones, and at the granite rock, mostly overheard by him, as well as from his subsequent cross-raking of his nephew, after Moya's flight from the muslin ghost, the admiral got a clear notion of how matters really stood.

In the first reflux of the tide of happiness round her despairing heart, Moya drew back a step from the uncle and the nephew, glanced quickly, twice or thrice, from the one to the

other, in a hesitating way; but soon taking her resolution, extended her arms, and threw herself on the tar's neck, crying and sobbing, and kissing his unsightly cheeks, forehead—nay, lips, and hugging him tight to her relieved bosom. Her lover, instead of looking jealous, smiled, and even shed some grateful as well as happy tears, along with her; and the true state of the case soon becoming known through the barn, many an eye, among the generous-hearted male portion of the guests, to say nothing of all the eyes of all the woman-kind present, followed young Terence's example.

"Avast! avast, there, you little she-pirate!" whimpered the admiral himself, tears ("as big as peas," Murty Meehan said,) rolling through the ugly channel across his face, and making it beautiful, as doth the fresh mountain-stream the rocky gully cleft in the mountain's side; "avast, there, I say!—off wid your grapplin' irons, or, sink my ould hulk to ould

Davy, but I'll change the sailin' ordhers, and take you in tow for the cruise my own self, afther all that's jawed about, d'ye see me! The young Terry, a-hoy! chaplain, a-hoy!—here, you loobers, free me of this craft—I've got enough of her."

Striding to the head of the supper-table, Terence the elder counted down one hundred guineas, as his nephew's fortune, and then scarce allowing any one, including the priest, time enough to recover from their many surprises, or to know what they were doing, had him married to Moya Moore. And when all resumed their places at the nuptial board, it was not upon his own generous feelings and conduct that the old admiral grew egotistical, but upon what he thought a great deal more of, namely, his own unsurpassable cleverness in hoaxing the young pair with an appearance of the ghost, which he had overheard them "jawin' about;" and afterwards in keeping Moya in the dark—a punishment for her hav-

ing hung out false colours when he "spoke her," her mother in company, on the head of their proposed cruise—as to the real Terry O'Brien she was eventually to sail under.—"An' so," quoth our ould admiral, "seein' as how I never was much a-gog myself—not half so much as my shipmit, Murty Meehan—for a new voyage, off o' all the ould tacks, an' that all I wanted an' all I want, is safe moorage for ould hulk, till it foundhers (and be d——d to it)—an' seein' how, furthermore, the young Terry alongside never done me no spite, though his commandher, the born brother o' me, did—why, afther all this, d'ye see me, it's no great shakes if I gives up full command, for the rest o' the voyage, an'—with fair sayman's allowance o' grog, Misthress Moore, d'ye mind me—take on vid first lieutenant's berth aboord the ship.

"Here's your health, an' long life, an' may your ould hulk niver foundher at all, my poor ould admiral, darlin'!" cried Murty

Meehan, *his* eyes still running over with admiration and love of his protegé; an' here's another toast to go along vid that one—here's what brought the showers o' goold an' good loock to the whole iv us—here's 'The Bit o' Writin'.'"

It would be doing injustice to the widow Moore not to say that, to the hour when, notwithstanding Murty Meehan's bacchanalian prayer, his old hulk did founder at last, she never infringed on the old admiral's "sayman's allowance," nor indeed, in any way upon his comforts under the family roof. Of Moya's attentions, or of her husband's, to their eccentric benefactor, nothing need be said. So that our excellent friend and hero lived happily many a long year; long enough, indeed, to instruct a very, very little Terry O'Brien in all his sea-terms—thus ensuring them fame in his third generation—and to build and launch for him, on a pond, formed by damming in a corner of the brook, at the celebrated stepping-stones, two seventy-four-gun ships. It is recorded,

however, that, upon afterwards bringing those vessels into action, as separately English and French, himself commanding the one, his grand-nephew the other—"the lubberly Frinch flag" adorning the latter, the gay and gallant union jack flying over the decks of the former—it is recorded, we say, that the ould admiral, forgetting in the heat of the engagement its mimic character, and giving way, for an instant, to all his habitual hatred and contempt of the Gallic enemies of Great Britain, made real war on the Lilliputian ship of the line, and, with one kick and one dread oath, consigned and sent it "to ould Davy."

THE IRISH LORD LIEUTENANT

AND

HIS DOUBLE.

THE IRISH LORD LIEUTENANT AND HIS DOUBLE.

It is really quite true that some time ago, and not long ago either, there was a London gentleman who took a strange fit of ambition into his head. His partial friends, or himself alone of his own accord, or he, in concert with them, believed that he bore, in face, air, and even in the upper part of his figure, a striking resemblance to a certain nobleman, who had become highly distinguished by brilliant qualities of various kinds. In truth there was a likeness, but a general one only, between him and the

celebrated Duke, (or Marquis—at present we cannot declare which ought to be the proper title,) and, highly flattered by this personal compliment of nature, he did all in his power to seem "the very image." He studied his original as closely as the nobleman's appearance in public, in the streets, in the parks, or in "the house," gave him opportunities for doing so; and, in consequence of his observations, he changed his elongated hat for one of a round fashion, and his light hair for a sandy-coloured, or haply (for we hate being as demonstrative as he himself was) a raven-black wig; he instructed his tailor how to cut his coat; he spent hours before his glass, practising the very tie of his neckcloth—to say nothing of the other hours occupied, by its aid, in trying to imitate a bow, a smile, a turn of the lip, or a droop or a toss of the head. But, although much was gained by all these adaptations and labours, something yet remained to be done, in order to procure a public and general mis-

conception of who he was; for the Double's great longing consisted of a wish to have people gaze after him in the streets, in proof of how well he enacted his mute lie; and here (as regarded self-exhibition in the streets) lay his difficulty. At home, indeed, or in the houses of his particular friends, while he *sat* quietly at table, he succeeded amazingly well, because, in fact, in a sitting posture, you could not so easily detect that his figure was considerably shorter than the noble one of his supposed counterpart; but one cannot well sit down, out of doors, in a thronged metropolis; unless, indeed, one sits in a saddle, on horseback; and even if one could do the former-mentioned feat, it were of no avail in this particular case, inasmuch as the man to be cheated out of the admiration due exclusively to his own person, never did it; and as to sitting in a saddle, our gentleman had no saddle, not to talk of a horse's back to put it on. Truth must out; although "a *real* gen-

tleman," the high prices at which human existence, with a reasonable share of enjoyment superadded, must be purchased in London, had deterred his hitherto economical mind from attempting the keep of a steed worthy of being seen in and about the great city.

But what will not high ambition endeavour on the road to its object? The Double, after pondering the matter some time, started off, after breakfast, one morning, to scrutinize the studs of sundry livery-stables, of respectable character though reasonable charges; and with a vivid recollection in his mind of the often-contemplated horse most usually ridden about town by his own original, he selected, before dinner, an excellent likeness of the animal, and hired it, for two days in each week, at not a very extravagant price. And now, if ever a man were on his hobby-horse, surely he was on his; and twice every week, for months afterwards, we have seen him, at fashionable hours, walking or trotting, nay, even galloping, his new acqui-

sition, up and down Piccadilly, and by Hyde Park Corner into Grosvenor-place, and about the Parks, and where not; and veritable attention did they both draw from individuals of the passing crowds, who, having never seen the true man and horse anywhere but in the open air, were promptly imposed upon; nor is that all; but once or twice in the Ring in Hyde Park, we, and others along with us—(for at the time we speak of, he was beginning to be blown among us knowing ones, as Master Shallow might say)—have seen him bowed, or smiled, or kissed finger-tips to, out of carriages which he rapidly passed in the direction opposite to their motion; and oh, intoxicating spirit of fame! what a happy glow did not those palpable hits impart to the countenance of the successful aspirant!

Indeed, it cannot be guessed by what process of reasoning (to say little of feeling) he thus deemed himself honoured in his own mind, on account of only being mistaken for a celebrated

person. What, then, were the grounds upon which the poor Double so anxiously would have disowned his identity? (so anxiously, indeed, that we do believe he was ready and willing to sell himself to the devil, as Doctor Faustus did, could the bargain have ensured to him as perfect a change into the likeness he thirsted after, as was the change from youth to age ensured to the doctor by *his* bargain.) But 'tis useless multiplying questions or conjectures on the subject: we only know that, in a vein of perfect consistency, he was nearly as proud of the deception practised by his hired horse, as of that toiled after by himself; that he often wished the poor brute were conscious of the laurels he had gained; and that (wiping his brows with a handkerchief in a way he had once seen his better self do) he has been heard to say, after returning from a day's exhibition about town, "I do own myself grateful and proud for having been cast in the same mould with that great man!"

And so far, for months, as has been said, he passed a very happy life: when suddenly there arose a prospect of great interruption to the gathering of the triumphs of his deceptive existence. It is clear that if the nobleman were known to have left London, he could scarce hope to make people go on believing that he was still in London, unless, indeed, he wished to frighten passengers in the streets out of their senses, by being taken for the *wraith* or *fetch* of the absent public character. In fact, to continue in the glory of the occasional doubt that he was somebody else, the Double was necessitously chained to the place, though not to the spot of the place, inhabited by that somebody: and considerable, therefore, were his anxieties, and regrets, and sense of humiliation, when he read in the papers that the noble and gallant —— of —— was to go over immediately to Ireland as its Vice-King, or Lord Lieutenant.

True, the high appointment flattered his

vanity, in a kind of personal way. He felt it as an additional homage very nearly paid to himself; and strongly was he tempted to spend the summer, at least, in the Irish metropolis, in the hope of coming in for his just share of the usual public, that is street, worship, to be paid to the representative of the representative of royalty. But then, first of all, he feared, if he did not dislike, the Irish; and they were at that time more to be feared than ever, many of the counties of their country being in open insurrection, famine, and typhus-fever. And next, what was he to do for his well-esteemed horse, in Dublin? he could not think of purchasing him,—the price was too much even for ambition to pay, taking purse into account; but by no other arrangement could he prevail on the owner of the livery-stables to allow the distinguished animal to float within view of Ireland's Eye—(the little island so called in the bay of Dublin:) and, in a word, (and, alas!) the newly-appointed Vice-King sailed for his

Irish capital, while his disconsolate Double remained, still torn by indecision, in London.

Scarce a month had elapsed, however, after the Lord Lieutenant's arrival in the land of (sometimes) potatoes, when the good folks of Dublin began to be puzzled, as their brethren of London had been, by the vision of his copyist, riding about the main streets, or along the beautiful quays, or in the Phœnix Park; the horse, too, whether the London one or not, being a very good similitude. One fortunate circumstance was in favour of our adventurer. The Lord Lieutenant (though he stuck no great bunch of shamrock in his hat or on his breast, and pointed at, or pressed his hand upon it, as some people had done before him) was beginning to be very popular, in consequence of a mode of conduct, as manly, and as suitable to his nature, as it was good in policy. In truth, from almost the day of his arrival, he had thrown himself upon the confidence of the people, asking the higher

classes of them to share his hospitality, or good humouredly sharing theirs ; and showing himself in public, with the least ostentation possible, to the other classes. To come to our point: he began soon to ride through the streets, very often quite alone ; and here, it will be perceived, was the circumstance in favour of his untired and untiring mimic of which we have already spoken. Here was the Vice-Sovereign in a situation susceptible of perfect imitation by one man and horse ; and it is quite true that the lonely impostor sometimes succeeded to his heart's content in consequence ; hats and caps were taken off to him by men and boys at either side of the streets, as he rode along, bowing and smiling to a degree of similarity only conferable by long practice ; and having heard that the object of his mixed adoration and self-esteem, had alighted one day at the door of a pastry-cook's shop, and chatted amiably with the pretty girl behind the counter, he also did dismount at the door of

another shop of the same kind, and did also overwhelm with a sense of being inexpressibly honoured and lifted out of herself, the not as pretty handmaiden of the rival establishment; and after all this he would steal away, horse and self, to deposit the former in his livery-stable, and then win, by circuitous and unfrequented ways, his own humble lodgings, and sit down, a delighted man, to his chop or his steak, not now playing the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to his orderly landlady or her smoke-dried daughter; though indeed it added to his notions of self-consequence in the house, to hear them begin to say—even while he strove to disrobe himself of the character—"how very like he was."

But his happiness was again doomed to be sadly interrupted. It was announced that the Lord Lieutenant would speedily set out upon a tour through some of the counties in Ireland, and some of the disturbed ones too! For all the reasons—and more with them—given for

his troubles when he heard of the intended voyage from London to Dublin, he felt agitated anew. Doubtless, the Irish he had met with in Dublin itself, were not so much to be dreaded as he had laid the thing down in his own mind; but the barbarians of the insurrectionary and remote quarters of the country! the savages, whooping among their hills and bogs, with scythes and pikes in their hands! His soul, although nothing of its darling thirst for renown had abated, shrank from such a prospect of peril. Besides, would there be much glory, worthy of the name, to be gained by the mistakes of his person committed by the populace of small towns or villages, or by peasants on the roadside, even supposing he should escape danger? Yes! and a new and brilliant ray of future fame flashed on his soul. Yes! by some happy combination of circumstances, in his character of Lord-Lieutenant, he, also—and he, really—might allay an Irish rebellion, or staunch the wounds of

civil discord. But fears, deadly fears, came on him again. His horse too, as in a former case?—In truth, we must a second time part from him undecided, and a prey to conflicting wishes and doubts, longings and terrors; and in the mean time, after some other things, let us occupy ourselves a little with his reality.

This was not a year of rank insurrection, in any of the usually disturbed (that is, starving) districts of Ireland. Great outrages were not committed by the neglected, uneducated, and despairing peasantry. The chief feature of their refractory spirit, for the season, was evinced in combinations and determinations not to cut down the corn of any of their land owners, no matter of what creed, who, during the speechifying of a recent election, we believe, had thought proper to give them rather hard words.

"An' so, we're not as much as to lay a finger on the poor Capt'ns whate, ather,

Con?" asked one of a body of legislators among them, who were assembled, by stealth, at a late hour of the night, in an old barn, for the purpose of organizing the rebellious proceedings of the next day;—it will be understood that the querist spoke in a tone of mock compassion for "the poor capt'n," while his features expressed a bitter sneer.

"The divvle a grain of id 'ill ever lie in shafe, wid help from our holy Roman reaping-hooks, Micky, *ma-bouchal*," answered Con, who might be termed chairman of their committee of public safety, though, indeed, he was only squatted on a thin lair of old straw, accidentally found in the empty barn.

"Och, an' it's like, if we don't cut it for him, that he'll be forced to send a little way to the north for the nate Orange hands," remarked a third,—"becase, ye see, boys, we're only all a set o' the baste-brutes o' Romans that's to be found about him in these parts, and that he

said, out afore all the gintlemen, th' other day, waren't fit to be touched wid a pair o' tongs, so we waren't, the Lord look down on us !—"

"Amin," assented Micky—"an' since he can stop his nose at us afore the whate is ripe, he can do widout us, when it's ready to shell idself about the fields."

"That's a thruth," said another—"an', sure, when the people that God plaised to put in a country, aren't fit to cut the harvest that God put in it too, why, thin, the Capt'n must only thry to send for the orangemen, the few hundred miles, as my gossip here tould ye afore me, or else see how many rale, honest boys, like 'em, he'll be able to get in the barony."

"An' they're asily counted," resumed Con, the chairman—"four of 'em, all in a lump; ould Spear, wid the head shakin' on his shouldhers, like the last lafe on the top of a popalar—he that cries 'amin' to his reverence, the ministher, in the church, every Sunday—ould Spear, I say, is one; then there's the two

Hucks, brothers, the wavers; the only bodies that hears ould Spear in the church, or does be there to hear him, barrin' the ministher's own wife and childher, and the Capt'n himself, long life to him—an' to his whate, too—the Hucks is—stop—ould Spear is one—yes—the two Hucks is three—craturs so worn away with the shuttle, and goin' in winther to a could church, that—but, look up there, boys!"—cried the speaker, suddenly interrupting himself, as he stared towards the roof of the barn. The eyes of all the other rebels followed his, and fixed upon the face of a man which was visible thro' a rent in the thatch, and which earnestly regarded them.

"It's Connors, the informer!" shouted Micky —"out wid us, boys, an' let us give him what some of us owes him, at last!"

"I'm no Connors, and I'm no informer, said the man overhead, "stop where ye are, boys, and look at my fatures again."

"By the mortial man!" cried one of the

conspirators, a young taciturn, sad-browed fellow, who previously had not uttered a word, though he now spoke with remarkable liveliness of voice and manner, as he sprang from his primitive seat on his heels by the rough wall of the building—"By the mortial man, an' he says thrue!—it's poor Ned Cahill is in it, if he's a livin' man this night!—"

"You're not far off from the mark, Peery O'Dea," replied the intruder—"and, now that you're sure o' me, won't you and the other boys let me drop down among ye, to discoorse one word?"—He prepared to descend through the aperture as he spoke; his face disappeared from it; his legs, his body, took the place of the former; then he swung an instant, by the hands, from the rude joists of the roof, and saying—"tisn't the same way some people 'ud like to see me hangin', boys"—he alighted firmly on his outspread feet, in the middle of the earthen floor of the barn. There was ease, agility, and boldness in all his motions while

accomplishing this not unperilous descent; and now, the rushlight which illumined the council of the disaffected Irish, showed the person of a slight-limbed man of thirty, or thereabouts, with broad chest and shoulders, and a well-favoured face, of which the only disagreeable expression was the suspicious curl of the brow, and the sidelong quick glance of the eye.

"Musha, my poor fellow! poor Ned!" resumed Peery O'Dea, hastening to him, and there were tears in Peery's eyes, and a tremor in his limbs, while they interchanged the usual salute—kissing each other's cheeks, as they held each other's hands. The other peasants looked on, with various expressions of countenance. Some showed sympathy; some anxiety, perhaps for themselves; and one or two regarded the new-comer, as if forming a selfish resolution towards him.

"And how is Nelly, *ma-bouchal?*" demanded Ned Cahill.

"The only sisther o' yees is brave an' hearty," answered Peery O'Dea—"if it wasn't for thinkin' a great dail about you, Ned, an' crying, mornin', noon, and night, on the head of it all."

"An' her *weenoch?*" continued Cahill.

"As fine a lump of a boy as ever you ——" began the vain father. His brother in-law interrupted him.

"Oh, well,—sure I know, Peery; Nelly's gorsoon 'll want no praises you can give him; but that's not the business, now. I cum here, a good stretch o' road, to spake o' something else to you and the boys fornent me, only I'm hungry, not to say drouthy, an' 'ud ax a bit an' a sup afore I make my noration; so you'll just step out, *a-vich*, and beg a mouthful for me from Nelly, and tell her I'll see her, may be, the night, afore I take to my thravels again."

"*I* 'll run out," volunteered one of the two men, whom we have mentioned as glancing at

Cahill in a questionable way,—'I'll run out, Peery, an' you can be stoppin' wid your brother-in-law."

"No," said Cahill, fixing upon him an expressive look—"no, neighbour, (we're all neighbours afther a manner, tho' I wont take id on me to say I ever saw much of *you* afore); but no, neither Peery nor you need go now. Con, my boy," turning hastily to the ex-chief of the assembly, "you and I are ould friends, an' you'll think it no great throuble to run and ax a morsel to ate for a hungry and a tired man."

"You're afther just sayin' it, Ned *a-vich*," responded Con, and he arose and strode towards the badly-secured and crazy door of the barn. "I'll let you out my own self," continued Cahill,—"there," holding the door only a little way apart, while he again glanced keenly around him, "and now, God speed you:" he shut the door, and secured it as he had found it; "an' you and I, Peery, can just step, the closest of

any, to the dour; for who knows who might be on the scent of one of us abroad;" there's great temptation, boys," turning to the legislators, as he drew a pistol from his breast, " great temptation, even among neighbours sometimes, in the reward offered for the head of a poor outlaw."

Short answers, yet such as sympathized with Cahill's well-known position, or seemed to do so, came from the greater number of his hearers after he had spoken; but Peery O'Dea was greatly moved; his friends heard him groan as he turned away his face.

" It's a long time since you cum this road afore, Ned," remarked the Micky before named, " tho' we hard tell of you showing yourself, here and there, in other places."

" Ay, Micky, the life I'm forced to keep isn't the pleasantest: here an' there, as you say, good weather an' bad; sleepin' little, and never two nights together on the same road, an' never undher a christian roof, but out in the fields at

the snug side of a stack, or in a wood, or in a plantation, or near the fox's hole, or down by the river near the otter's bed; and all for fear of what I said a moment ago. The neighbours are very good to me—I'll never deny id; and, as yet, I have no rason to be in dread or doubt of any one; but the reward in the proclamations is a heavy one; that's all I have to say."

He started slightly, Peery sharing his emotion, as a woman's voice came to the door at the outside, high in anxiety if not lamentation. Cahill, after listening a moment, hastily undid a second time the fastenings of the door, using, however, some caution still, and after saying in a whisper to Peery, "Look about you," opened his arms to embrace his only sister, whom he had not for a long time seen, and who was his nearest surviving relation.

Their meeting evinced deep and true affection on both sides. The young woman had an interesting if not handsome face, and it and her person just began to indicate the matronly

change, which her characters and duties of wife and mother were working in her mind. She wept abundantly, while her arms surrounded his neck, and her face lay hidden on his bosom; but for some minutes her attempts to speak could not get beyond, "O Ned! O poor Ned!" Nor was the rough man she clung to unmoved.

At length they began to talk a little more freely, and calling to mind the claim which her brother had forwarded by Con upon her hospitality, Mary O'Dea caused the outlaw to sit down near the door, with his back to the wall, upon her ample cloak folded into a temporary cushion; and confronting him, sitting also "on her hunkers," she gave him to eat of the plain fare she was able to snatch up at home, and to drink, too, out of a bottle of "potheen," diluted with water. During her attentions, and his industry in consequence of them, Mary looked every other instant at her brother's features, or scanned his person, and perhaps the state of his attire, while tears still flowed down her

cheeks, and plaintive mutterings escaped her. Poor Mary, poor as she was, deserves to be called a good specimen of the only really beautiful existence under Heaven's sun, a true-hearted and gentle-hearted woman; she possessed, too, as may appear, what (thank Providence!) often mixes up with female excellence in the softest shape, a strong, prompt mind, and a sacred sense of right and wrong.

"An' won't you stop wid us the night, Ned, *agraw?*" she asked, towards the conclusion of his hasty meal.

"You oughtn't to say to me, *won't* you, Ned, but *can* you, Mary, *machree*," he answered, turning his head to the door to note if Peery continued to do duty at it, with the pistol he had slipped into his hand, "that's what you ought to say to me, Mary; but little's the use in thinkin' of the thing the heart 'ud like best to do, when the body isn't able to do it."

"*I*'ll do something to get *you* lave to do *that*, Ned, my dear, afore I'm many days

oulder," resumed Mary, glancing at her husband, and, with a nod of her head, looking expressively at her brother, while she spoke in a low, cautious voice.

"Mary! Mary *asthore!*" he said, in the lowest whisper, although its cadence betokened sudden and deep emotion, "what are you for saying, girl? get up, and come this way wid me."

He took her by the arm, and led her into a corner of the barn, where they were far removed from the peasants.

"What's this, at all?" he continued, "tell me in one word, Mary!"

"I know all about it at last, Ned, and I'll do my best to free you from the outlawry," she replied.

"*Duoul!*" he cried impatiently; "the woman has taken lave of her seven senses!—all about what? and what would you dhrame o' doing? and who tould you, Mary, if you *do* know all?"

"Himself, Ned."

"Peery, his ownself?" he demanded.

"No other cratur; who could? Poor fellow, he couldn't long keep it from me; the heart in his body is too sthraight, and it loves and likes us both too well to let him lie down quietly, and you—"

"Whisht, Mary, for your life! whisht!" he cast his habitually suspicious eyes all round him; "*musha*, but he's a born fool of his mother to open his lips to you a word about it! an' tell me, Mary, what *are* you goin' to do? what *can* you thry that wouldn't be against your own husband—the father of your *weenoch!*" he continued, passionately, "and daare you, Mary—daare you attempt anything so unnaatural as that? Mary, my curse be upon your head—and I will pray to our father and our mother to curse you out of their graves, if you let only the thought of it come into your mind!" She several times strove to speak, he seemed resolved to afford her no opportunity. "Give over thinking of it, I warn you!" he went on, "and now

good-bye, and God bless you, if you deserve his blessing; good-bye, Mary, I'll see you again as soon as I can!" He hastily turned from her, and, standing with his back to the door, continued speaking to the peasants, without an instant's pause, "I'm goin' my road, boys, and as my time is short, I must say what I have to say to ye, at a hop-and-a-jump; so here it is. The Lord Lieutenant will be down among ye the morrow morning. He's to stop wid a good frind of yours, I hear, and that's like as if he wasn't far off from being a good frind himself. I don't want to advise ye to be good boys fornent his eyes; sure you'll thrate him well of your own accord, becase ye all know he manes well to us, (the first of his kind that ever said so, at laste,) and morebetoken becase he goes about the poor counthry like a man that has thrust in its poor people; ridin' his horse, sometimes, amost alone, along by roads and *bosheens*, as simple, ay, and a great dail simpler than some o' the little squireens nigh hand to us;

well, if it's a thing that Captain Lighton axes the Lord Lieutenant to ax ye to cut his harvest, it would only be a good turn, afther all, not to refuse; and it may sarve yourselves; and may be it might sarve me, too, in an endayvour I'm goin' to make to get lave to come home from my rambles, and take to arning an honest mouthful again; and so, there's what I'm come a begging to ye for; and now, the good night to ye, boys, or the top o' the morning; for that matter the day's breakin' already. God speed ye."

"Peery O'Dea," he added, whispering his brother-in-law, "help me to open this ould door quick, quick! and out wid you now like a hurler afore me! and let us run over a field or two together. I want to spake to you, and keep you free of harm. Come, man, hurry!" He seized Peery's arm, and almost forced him through the door-way; and when Mary and some of the peasants went out to look after them, the brothers-in-law were nowhere to be seen. Mary pondered a moment, shook her

head, and then bent her steps homeward, little changed in the resolution she had taken to try and restore her brother to society.

"What fools' talk has passed between you and Mary, Peery O'Dea?" asked Cahill, when they had gained their place of concealment, the ruins of an old castle which overhung the main road to their village.

"Ned," answered Peery, "you know I've tould her all; don't fly in a passion wid me; I saw ye discoorsin' together in the barn, and it was asy to guess what Mary was sayin' to you."

"An' that's the way you keep your promise wid me?" questioned Ned.

"I couldn't help it, Ned Cahill, *asthore.* It was lyin' like a heavy stone on my heart. Sure enough, we both thought it would be for the best; I to hould my tongue, an' thry to work for her an' the *weenoch*, while you were only forced to hide yourself for a start. But I'll tell you what it is, Ned; the mornin' I hard o' them

takin' you, I set off for the jail dour, to give myself up to them in your stead, as it well become me to do; an' nothin' but the news I larned on the road o' your breakin' jail, an' givin' 'em leg bail, the thing that put the outlawry on you, afther all, poor boy, nothin' but that sent me home agin. Ay, an' I have more to say to you, Ned Cahill; the first moment I hear o' your fallen into their clutches a second time, I'll be on the road to the jail dour a second time too; for I can't ate by day, nor sleep by night, thinkin' o' you. An' afther all we can say about Mary and the child, my heart tells me I'm not doin' a thing that a man ought to do."

"Bother an' botheration, Peery; do you mane to tell me, even if it did happen that I was locked up agin, that it *would* be the part of a man to start himself off, of his own accord, from wife an' *weenoch;* to say nothin' o' the poor ould father o' you, sittin' at home by the fire; an' let them send you for life across the wide

seys, if they didn't take the life from you afore-hand? I tell you, man, you have your duties laid out for you on this yearth; as for me, no one is dependin' on me, and no one 'ud miss me, barrin' yourself an' Mary; an' even ye only for the sorrow, an' nothing at all for the loss: an' I'm not a boy given to marryin', I don't think the notion of id 'll ever come into my head agin; for, in throth, Peery, from the day I helped to carry poor Cauth Farrel to the berrin-ground, afther the long sickness that made her a light load to carry anywhere, afore it ended her days"—Cahill's voice changed, and his eyes fell—"from that day to this, Peery, though I was a younger boy then, I never saw the *colleen* I'd care to be thinkin' of; no, nor wanted to see her neither. But we're talkin' a power o' *raumaush* here, in this ould place. Tell me, Peery, an' don't tell me anything but the thruth, how much o' the raal business did you blab out to Mary?"

"I didn't hide a single bit o' the raal busi-

ness, Ned. I tould her that it was myself (an' you not wid us nor in the sacret) that went up to Lighton's house that night, for the arms, along wid the other boys; an' I tould her you only follied us to get me home out o' danger, when, by bad luck, you found out what I was goin' to do; and that, when the Peelers purshued us, afther we got the guns and pistols, and were hard and close on my thrack, you ran up to me, Ned, an' forced my gun from me, an' made me turn off home by a cross-cut; och, Ned! if it could come into my mind that night, what you were goin' to do—"

"Phu, Peery, I never meant they should ketch either of us, when I took your gun, an' if you were bid by me to use your legs sooner, they never would have to tell that they came up wid me: 'twas our argufyin' the thing that spiled all. Well, no matther now. Just listen to me over agin. What's Mary goin' to do, to thry an' get me free o' the outlawry? can you tell me that, Peery?"

Peery solemnly protested he could not. He had never heard his wife mention the subject. Cahill looked grave, and, after a pause, kindling into a rage, said, "By the sky over us! if *my* sisther, my father's and my mother's daughter, ever attempts the like of it, I could kill her with my own hand!"

Peery asked what he meant; and it was obvious, from his perfectly unconscious manner, that he did not share with his brother-in-law a single doubt of Mary.—Cahill evaded answering him.

"You must stop the day by my side, Peery—that's all; or as much of the day, at laste, as 'll be wantin' to do what I mane to doe in. An', first of all, let us hide here till the Lord Lieutenant passes by to Mr. Lowe's big house; I'd like to see him that I may know him again; an' he'll soon come now, for Mr. Lowe expects him to the great break'ast."

Accordingly, both remained in the old ruin some hours, peering out upon the road through

narrow window-slits in its walls. And Ned Cahill seemed to have gained true information as to the movements of Vice-Royalty. After some time distant shouts reached them; they watched the top line of the hilly road; the uproar came nearer; clouds of dust arose in view; and, dimly seen through it, down streamed and trundled the crowds of peasantry, who were drawing his Excellency, with silken ropes, in his open carriage, and the huge crowds who, jumping and capering, were before them, beside them, and behind them; and Mr. Lowe, and other gentlemen of the place, on horseback, in front; "an' not a soger nor a Peeler to be seen!"—as the ecstatic mob declared, and truly declared;—the ecstatic mob, who, not two years before, had been enjoying the Insurrection Act, and who have not remained quite ecstatic, ever since that blessed morning.

"I'm tould I'll know him in the carriage by his takin' off his hat and makin' all manner o'

bows and fine manners to the people ;—soliloquized Cahill, looking close, as the frantic rout whirled onward the truly and meritedly popular Lord Lieutenant, often tumbling over each other, in the miserable zeal of each and all to "have one pull at the ropes."

"Well, an' there I see him, sure enough," resumed Cahill, an' it 'ill be quare if I don't know him agin, after he ates his break'ast—much good may it do him, every bit an sup of id."

At Mr. Lowe's hall-door the people permitted his Excellency to stop. Their parish priest there read him a little address, to which he replied kindly, in impromptu. Again we have to notice the correctness of Ned Cahill's private sources of information. Captain Lighton, who, with other gentlemen, had ridden out that morning to meet that great man, handed a note into the carriage. The Lord Lieutenant, interrupting a few words of conversation with the parish priest, immediately glanced once at it, and

then, saying something in a low voice, gave it to his late reverend panegyrist, who, having perused it in his turn, thus addressed the assembled thousands.

"My good people—down to this morning ye have refused, even against my request, to cut Captain Lighton's corn; here is his Excellency, the Lord Lieutenant-General, and General Governor of Ireland, and your friend, if you will let him, by deserving his friendship,—and through my mouth his Excellency is pleased to ask ye, will you, or will you not, save the blessed harvest that Divine Providence——"

"We will, plase his Majisty and your Riverince;" interrupted a voice very like that of "Con;"—"we will, out o' glory to *him* for axin, us,—an' for another little rason, becase poor Ned Cahill, that we're all sorry for, an' love an' like, is afther bidding us do the same thing aforehand."

"Ned Cahill! the poor outlaw!" resumed the good priest, forgetting a little chagrin he had

felt, on the head of being cheated out of a very pretty peroration, by Con's interruption: and he and the Lord Lieutenant began to discourse anew, in seeming earnestness.

Ned Cahill and Peery O'Dea soon had proof, from a changed hiding-place, that the people respected Con's pledge as their spokesman; shouting and capering, and brandishing their sickles, hundreds of them rushed into the Captain's fields, and simultaneously attacked all the ripe corn they could find.

And still the outlaw showed a knowledge of how more important people were to act upon that—to him—memorable day. Having again spirited Peery along with him to a convenient place of ambush, he watched, earnestly, the expected approach of the Lord Lieutenant, along a bye-road leading, zig-zag, from Mr. Lowe's house. Peery knew his purpose by this time, and awaited its issue with his own mental reservations of what he would do, should evil come of Ned's bold thought.

"Whisht, Peery!" cried Cahill, catching his arm, as he glanced over the hedge of the road, with a sparkling eye, and suddenly flaring cheeks:—"here he is, sooner than I or others had a notion of!—and ridin' quite alone, too, by the Powers!—not an *edge-a-gong,* nor Misther Lowe, himself, wid him!—well, an' that's quare! bud I s'pose they're behind the turn o' the road; or, at any rate, it's all the betther for me—so here goes, in the name o' God and good luck!"—and springing upon the road, and falling instantly upon his knees, straight before the object of his soul's solicitude and reverence, he continued,—"Oh, your Excellency! oh, my Lord Lieutenant!—oh, plaise your Majisty, hear one word from a poor, heart-sore man!"

"Wha—a—t, what, what friend?" stuttered the person he addressed, endeavouring to rein in and quiet his horse, who had been amazingly startled at the sudden vision of Cahill; and, indeed, the horse's master did not speak or look like a man of perfect presence of mind.

"My life, my life!" resumed Cahill; "wait, your honour, my Lord Lieutenant, an' I'll hould him for you;"—and he jumped up and grasped the horse's reins—"an' now ——"

"Let go, fellow! let go!"—screamed the rider, in increased terror, for, from Cahill's brogue and impassioned pronunciation, he had mistaken the possessive pronoun which the supplicant had placed before the word "life."

"Och, an' won't I, your Majesty, wont I, when you only hear me spake one word!—sure I'm no one else in the world, bud poor Cahill the outlaw, that your Majisty—"

"Outlaw!" repeated the other—"savage villain! do you mean to murder me?"

"Murder you, my Lord Lieutenant?" repeated poor Cahill, in his turn, letting go the reins, and starting back, aghast, with clasped hands—"By the blessed stars in the sky! I love an' like you so well, that I wouldn't harm a hair o' your horse's mane, let alone one o' your own head, for the round world stuffed full of goold?"

"And why do you carry that pistol, then?" still stammered the poor Double, now a little soothed, however, by the honied flattery of Cahill, and the repetitions of the splendid titles addressed to him.

"This? the bit of a pistol, my lord?" Cahill drew it from his breast, where its butt had not been well hidden—"och, an' is id me you fear, on the head o' this!—lookee here, plaise your Majisty———"

He discharged the weapon in the air, close by the horse's ears, however; the animal pranced and reared in a frenzy of terror, and his rider, still sharing his feelings, could scarce keep his saddle.

"An' see here, agin"—continued Cahill, hurling the pistol from him—an action lost to the confounded and dancing eyes of the Double—and now, at laste, your Majisty 'll please to hear me!"—he renewed his grasp on the horse's bridle, really only meaning well—"you put the outlawry on an innocent poor man, my Lord

Lieutenant!—one that never riz a hand, for bad, in the counthry!—oh, take it off o' me, take it off o' me! Let me go home from the hills and woods, agin, to sleep undher a christhen roof, an' to meet my fellow-cratures widout bein' afeard o' them, an' to put my hand to the spade or the plough, agin, that I may arn the honest bit, and the honest sup, an' that I may go to the house o' God, an' kneel down, there, and put up my prayers for you an' yours, to the last day I draw the breath o' life!—ochown, take it off o' me, an' may you reign long in glory, an' die happy!—It's an innocent boy that axes you, my Lord the Lieutenant—it's an innocent poor boy! —Say the word out o' your mouth, say the word, an' do a good action! say the word an'———"

"Well, well, well, man"—interrupted the Double, his fears now only divided between the uncertainty whether he had to do with a wild-Irish assassin, or a wild-Irish madman—"d—don't you pull me about so, and we shall see—let go the bridle and I *will* say the word

—there—stand aside, now, and you may regard yourself as a free man."

"Hurrah!" screamed Cahill, jumping up a good height from the ground, as he smote his breast in utter joy—"Peery O'Dea, inside the fence, there? Peery O'Dea, do you hear that?"

"Hurrah! an' it's I that do!" answered Peery, with another shout, discovering himself.

"It's off o' me! its off o' me!" continued Cahill, hugging his brother-in-law—"isn't id, your honour-in-glory—isn't id?"

"It is, it is—to be sure it is—have I not said so? I revoke every thing—only wont you and the other man move away from my horse's head? So—good day to you both—all's right—good day——" and seeing the road at last clear before him, the speaker gave spur and rein to his horse, and was out of sight in a moment,—ay, and out of Ireland in some hours after, from the nearest sea-port, cured, in a degree, of performing his absurd and miserable impostures in it.

"There you go, an' may honor an' glory be in your road, afore you!"—Cahill continued to shout.

"There you go, an' may you never know what it is to have a heart as heavy as the hearts you're afther makin' happy this day!"—added Peery.

"Stand!" cried voices at their backs—"one of you is Cahill, the outlaw." They turned, and saw half-a-dozen police, who, with presented carbines, immediately surrounded them.

"Bother, boys, wid your 'stand!'"—answered Ned—"I'm Cahill, sure enough, but no outlaw, this blessed day, thank God, an' his honor the Lord Lieutenant! Hurrah!"—He jumped again.

"Come, come—your arms,"—said the serjeant of the party.

"Arms? sorrow a one I have, barrin' the two God gave me; a little while ago, to tell thruth, I had a sort of an ould pistol wid me—but I sint the bullet of id up into

the air, an' itself afther the bullet, to the divvle, entirely—an' its my word I give you, masther Peelers, honies, that from this day, out"——

"Search him"—interrupted the serjeant.

"Here, then — sarch — sarch, — sarch—oh, wid all my heart. I tell you, boys, it's only givin' yourselves throuble for nothin' "——

"Fall in with the men, then, and march for jail," resumed the serjeant, when the useless search was ended.

"Jail? *me* march for jail? ye're mad to spake of id. It's more than your lives are worth to use the words. Take great care what ye're for doin'."

"Come, fall in:—where are the handcuffs?"

"Handcuffs!" as he heard them jingling—"have a' care o' your behaviour to me, I tell you once agin!" ejaculated Cahill, while he vainly resisted the strength used to manacle his hands—"his own self took the ban off o' me, masther Peelers—his own self, my Lord

the Lieutenant, only a minute agone, an' on this very blessed spot! ay, ye may laugh at me: bud I say he did! an' here's Peery O'Dea that's ready to say the same thing, for he hard an' seen him! didn't you, Peery, didn't you?"

Peery proved, indeed, a ready witness; but still the police sneered, until, after glancing down the road, in the direction of Mr. Lowe's house, the serjeant said, "Well, Cahill, now's the time to get grace from us, if your words are true,"—the man's tone was still deriding—"here comes his Excellency."

"Which way?" demanded Cahill, glancing up and down the road, in great astonishment —"Eh? the gentleman ridin' up to us wid Mr. Lowe an' the officers? stop—wait—stop—eh! by the powers o' man, an' it is, sure enough, however the divvle—or by the Lord's will—he got there!" for the Double had retreated in the direction contrary to Mr. Lowe's house—"Peery! Peery, *avich!*"—

" Shove aside, and clear the road," said the serjeant. The police and their prisoners accordingly stood at the fence, the men presenting arms. The Lord Lieutenant stopt before them, and was about to ask what was the matter, when Cahill broke forward, and falling almost prostrate, with his manacled hands, prayed his Excellency to look on him, and remember him well, and say whether or no he had not, a few moments before, pardoned him his offences; and at the same time he again shouted out for Peery O'Dea to support his assertion.

" The man must be mad,"—said the Lord Lieutenant, to Mr. Lowe—" both of them must be so; I have never seen either of them, in my life before: and yet how apparently sincere is their earnestness; one of them weeps."

At the sound of his Excellency's voice, Cahill started up, staring in misgiving and

dismay on the face of the speaker; and again he called, in a whisper, to Peery, "Peery, *avich!*" as if for counsel.

"No, Ned, *asthore*," replied Peery, after making his own observations, "'tisn't himself is afore us—or—it is himself, I mane—or else there's two o' them—or, it was the ould divvle that came the road, first of all, to make you go thro' wid the foolish thought o' your mind, and get you taken agin!"

While the Lord Lieutenant still spoke in an under tone with Mr. Lowe, the serjeant of the police advanced to recapture Cahill. Peery O'Dea now sprang forward and continued, in a loud, wailing voice—"But since they have you the second turn, Ned, it's time for me to do what I said!—Plaise your lordship, Ned Cahill, my wife's brither, tho' he broke jail, is as innocent as my own *weenoch* o' what sent him there!—I am the man—I, Peery O'Dea, —that headed the boys up to the house, for the arms that night,—an' Ned wasn't wid us

at all, only met me on the road, after we got what we went for—an' forced my gun for me, an' stood to be saized by the Peelers! an' this is the holy thruth, an' I'll get your honor plenty o' witnesses to say so:—an now, sure your Majisty 'ill just tell them to let him go, an' take me in his place, an' "—

"Don't put thrust in a word the fool of a boy is sayin', glory to your lordship," interrupted Cahill—"the head of him is cracked, becase I'm poor Mary's brother, an' he's often not in his right mind; 'twas in my hands the gun was found— an' 'twas I that broke jail—and, by coorse, it's I that ought to go to jail, over agin; an' so, mister serjeant—now, the Lord save us! an' what's this?"

Mary O'Dea held him in her arms, sobbing and weeping aloud. "To jail you'll never go, brother Ned, *machree!*"—she cried—"never, never, praises to the good God, an' our good Lord Lieutenant!"

"*Avich*, you poor cratur; an' did that de-

saitful divvle come across you, too, an' make you all manner o' promises?" asked Cahill, returning her embraces.

"Your honor, my lord!" continued Mary, "spake the word you promised me!"

Addressing Mr. Lowe, his Excellency, touched and affected, turned his horse's head—"Pray, Sir, explain to the poor people."

"Cahill," said Mr. Lowe, "your sister has saved you; at least confirmed the Lord Lieutenant's merciful dispositions towards you, previously formed out of other circumstances. She contrived to meet his Excellency, before my house, this morning, and, on condition that a considerable depôt of concealed arms—discovered by her, she has not said how," (Cahill glanced from Mary to Peery,) "should be delivered up, obtained your pardon. The tranquillity of the country for the last year, a word in your favour, from your priest and others, and indeed from myself, and a wish to show the deluded people that they will be treated

mercifully, whenever they, themselves, afford the opportunity—all this helped your sister's prayers.—Thank his Excellency. You are a free man."

That Cahill did as he was bid it would be idle to enforce. Neither is it necessary to describe the joy of the re united family. But, indeed, kind English readers,—contradictory as the thing may sound,—men made of mortal materials similar to those which we believe you like in the brothers-in-law, Ned and Peery, often plunder arms in some Irish counties, nay,—(and alas for the admission!) use them fearfully, too. Let us hope and pray, however, that such an Irish Lord Lieutenant as we here have sketched for you, acting under the wise instructions which shape his own excellent feelings and inclinations, may soon gain possession of all the hidden depôts of distraction, accumulated by the wretched people.

As for his Double—

"Peery *avich*," said Cahill, after they and

Mary had been left alone on the road—"let us run hard, straight-a-head, an' thry an lay hould o' that brute-baste of a pretendher!"

THE

FAMILY OF THE COLD FEET.

THE

FAMILY OF THE COLD FEET.

So were called a highly respectable Irish family; and the appellation is continued to their descendants of the present day, in consequence of the concluding circumstances of the following true narration. Incredulous some readers may be after having perused it to the end, notwithstanding our intimation that it deals with facts. Should such be the case we cannot help it; and shall only add, that while the occurrence, for which we apprehend

most question, has authenticated parallels in many countries over the world, its truth, in the particular instance before us, has been vouched to the writer by a member of—*The Family of the Cold Feet.* Ay, and cold were his own feet while he told the chilling story; so inveterately, so inheritedly cold, that the blaze of the jovial fire at which we sat, during his narrative, could not impart to them the least warmth; and cold, cold were his children's feet—all except one, who obviously took after her mother, as well in constitution as in face and personal conformation; and cold, cold had been his father's feet—as cold, while he lived, as when he had been dead three days, and decidedly cold all over; and his grandfather's, and his grandfather's mother's—which lady brought the inconvenience into the family. And now we begin to tell in what manner.

Antony Skelton, at four-and twenty, was a tall, well-limbed, fair-haired, ruddy-cheeked, blue-eyed, and half educated Irishman;—a

younger brother, too, though on that account scarce a whit less dangerous to many a blooming girl around him. He lived with his brother, the baronet, in the old cut-stone mansion, called Upper Court, having nothing to do but hunt, fish, shoot, cock-fight, dog-fight, badger-bait, ferret-chase the rabbits in the warren, and, above all, dear women, admire you. Profession he would none of; taking fees, either as attorney, barrister, surgeon or physician, was very much beneath his family consequence; he might have put his fine broad shoulders into a red jacket, indeed, (or rather long and broad skirted red coat, as was then good military exquisitism,) had there been spirited wars going on over Europe: but it was a time of profound peace, and he candidly admitted that he did not like the trouble of drilling, and parading, and mounting guard, when very little could be expected to come of it; and he had much

rather stay at home, amusing himself as a country gentleman on his brother's grounds.

This sounded in many ears as quite an independent resolution; but that it really was so may be questioned. There was little doubt that, at an early age, he had, with, great facility, disposed of, among the pleasures of the Irish metropolis, the few thousands which fell to his share, as a younger brother, according to his father's will: so that when he spoke with a toss of his head, of "staying at home, amusing himself as a country gentleman on his brother's grounds," he must have meant, though perhaps it never struck him, at his brother's expense into the bargain. Sir Roger was fond of him, however, and one of a class of men of that peculiar good nature, besides, who can countenance the expenses of those they are fond of, or, as he would himself have said, "used to," at the risk of their own personal independence; and

so, Tony did very well; nearly as well as if he had been elder son born, and wrote himself Sir Tony.

Well, gallantry, it has been declared, was, above all others, his amusement on his brother's grounds, and in the neighbourhood. For it he would, in truth, give up fox, hare, the river's side, the rabbit-warren, a cock-fight, a badger-bait—any other thing; and of this he boasted, as he ought to have done, to more fair faces than two or three, and was estimated accordingly—for a season at least—by each of those to whom, in turn, he made the avowal in strict confidence. Nor was "Master Tony"—or, more expressively with reference to his virtual reign at Upper Court, "the young master," as the tenants called him—particularly select in the exercise of his talent. His "grand passion," or universal passion, asserted and proved itself in a very efficient kind of way, from the "cottier's" comely daughter up through the family of the small

farmers, of the "strong farmer," of the gentleman farmer, and of the still more genteel farmer, till it had achieved its utmost flight, proportioned to his opportunities, at the fireside of the next 'squire, locally "square," baronet, bishop, or haply, real lord. For Tony certainly had the blessed talent of making himself agreeable, and therefore welcome, from the mud-cabin to the family seat. We have called him half-educated,—that is, he pretended to Virgil, and hinted at Euclid: still he had been a member of T. C. D., and he *could* smatter on, amusingly, among the very best society of his county; and in rhyming, which he devoted exclusively to songs in praise of angling, hunting, fishing, wine, and ladies, Tony was considered a master.

Now, any sagacious reader will perceive that so much had not been said about Mr. Tony's characteristics, unless that they must have a good deal to do with the origin and perpetuation of "cold feet" in his family; and

such, indeed, is the fact, as we hasten to make evident.

The house of a neighbouring gentleman had long been untenanted, save by the trusty servants in whose care he had left it. Mr. Neville lost a well-beloved wife, in her first confinement, and immediately after quitted his home and country to seek forgetfulness of sorrow in foreign lands. The innocent cause of her mother's death, his infant daughter, he deposited in safe and respectable hands, to be nursed through the first years of childhood; and when Esther Neville gained her sixth year, he sent for her from England, to which country he had just returned from the continent, and thenceforward assumed his natural right as her protector. For some time she was educated in England, afterwards in France and Italy, and ultimately in England again; and in her nineteenth year her father came back with her to his native country, to instal her, as her mother's suc-

cessor, in his paternal mansion; announcing his determination never to re-marry, and proclaiming her heiress to his considerable estate, and funded property.

Antony Skelton for some long weeks before her arrival within ten minutes' ride of Upper Court, had been rather at a loss for a new object of adoration. He soon got Sir Roger to accompany him to Mr. Neville's on a welcoming visit; fell in love with Esther, ten seconds after he had seen her; and having contrived to stay for dinner, while his brother returned home, told her as much before he left the house that evening.

Let no one be astonished at this dispatch. It was his way; he couldn't help it. No, no more than a connoisseur can help expressing raptures at the first sight of an old picture, although he may have seen hundreds, quite as old, before it. In very truth, Tony could not recollect the time since his sixteenth year, that he had once been able to curb the avowal

of his perfect love for any and every woman or girl the least interesting, by whose side he found himself the necessary number of hours. And we pray, in his behalf, that no ill-natured person will suppose it was because Esther Neville happened to be an heiress, and he a younger brother, that he so soon declared himself, in the present instance. No such thing. Heiresses were by no means new to him. He had been at the knees of one or two before, and given them up in a few months, weeks, or days, as it might be, for the untiring pleasure of once more manifesting his mighty love for the sex, in the case, perhaps, of a pennyless fifth or seventh daughter. No, indeed; the least mercenary lover on earth was Tony. And in some degree to account for this, considering his own pauper state, and a rapid growth of nephews at Upper Court, perhaps it is as well to surmise that, in thus offering fervid adorations, like a lusty sun, to every flower in the

female garden, he had not as yet ever thought of becoming entitled, by marriage, to the goods and chattels of one individual woman. But *why* he should not have done so we are utterly unable to explain.

And how sped his as yet newest of all wooings? How did Esther Neville take his sufficiently abrupt attack? Not as she ought to have done, had she much experience of the world, or of the various sorts of fools of it. Out of select English boarding schools, or of continental convents, she had lived but little; and romance substituted in her mind a wholesome and most necessary knowledge of mankind and of womankind. Of such a man as we have sketched Tony Skelton, at four-and-twenty, she had dreamed, as well as of her own powers of striking to the death at first sight; not forgetting his really fervid and seemingly unchangeable manner in giving her so quick a proof of her good opinion of herself. In truth, although, as the most

romantic woman is bound to do, Esther made no response to his first startling speech; Tony had not repeated it, with pretty additions, more than four times, when she did; and vows of deathless fidelity were forthwith interchanged; and in the stolen walks they enjoyed among the wild and solitary scenery adjacent to Mr. Neville's house, plans of future happiness, of happiness that never could, would, should, or ought to tire, towered up, like that same wild scenery, before and before them, till it faded into rich and beautiful vagueness in the distance. And this was as true of Tony Skelton as of Esther Neville. He felt as enthusiastic and as sincere as she did. Yes —not a doubt of it. He felt, in fact, as he had often felt before, just like a man in love for the very first time; and he could have sworn to the world, as well as to his own heart, that it was utterly impossible he should ever look with the slightest interest on another woman.

In fact, the ardent, quick-tempered Esther,

was in her paradise—Fool's Paradise. Once or twice only, she thought it odd that, in all their schemes for perennial blisses, her lover never happened to allude to the married state. But, on reflection, this could mean nothing at all; or, if anything, it illustrated his delicacy, and so helped to raise him in her estimation, if that were possible. It struck her, however, that she might as well tempt him a little on the point; so, one evening, when, as usual, she had stolen out to meet him by the river's side, Esther, after expressing her tremors at the idea of being missed and asked after by her father, added, "but our little uneasiness on that head, dear Tony, will soon be removed, —I mean when you propose for me at home."

"Propose for you, at home, dearest Esther?" he repeated, staring at her with great simplicity, and a disinterested observer might have added something like quandary, or stupidity. In truth, it was the first time the idea had presented itself to his mind. And here we

again express ourselves unable to make out the peculiar mental economy of our hero. Such as we have found him, however, we give him to the world.

A quick flash from Esther's dark eyes met his strange stare; and she demanded, "Why do you repeat my words?"

"Repeat your words, Esther?—oh, ay; yes, to be sure—what a blockhead I am—! ha! ha! don't be angry with me, *gra-ma chree*——" here he slightly interrupted his speech by a little act—"but, as I over and over told you, my darling,—looking straight into your beautiful face" (it was *not* beautiful, only deeply interesting) "always makes me forget what I am saying—ay, or doing either."

Esther constrainedly echoed his laugh; and, though nothing more distinct was said on the subject, all seemed well. On their way homeward, however, she thought Tony a shade graver, or more reflective than usual: and

she lay down that night with the germ of something disagreeable in her mind.

The next evening, Tony sent her a message, as usual, and they were again alone, in a suitable lover-like place. Esther came out, determined to watch him; and having made this resolution, she, doubtless, would have found in his words, looks, and manner, something she suspected him of, had he been as innocent as a babe. Truth must be told, however. Tony really was a changed, or at least, a changing man. Why? He no more knew, at present, than he had known, on similar occasions, many a time before. Once, only, during the evening, did he appear much interested; but the occasion for his alteration of demeanour was no comfort to Esther's heart.

"When my cousin Mary comes to see me, dear Tony, we must, at once, make her a confidante," said Esther.

"Certainly Esther. Does she come soon?"

"To-morrow—sometime of the day."

"Indeed! and that *is* soon;"—his handsome eyes beamed brightly,—though, alas! for poor Esther, they turned away, with a kind of a happy, speculative expression. "I'm so glad,—for your sake, I mean. Your cousin will be such company to you!"

"Thank you, Tony." Esther was quite put out; she could make nothing of him, no more than ourselves.

"Is she older or younger than you, Esther?" demanded Tony, still in a calculating way.

"About my own age."

"And like you?—any family resemblance?"

"Not the least; I am not *very* tall—she *is* tall; I am a brown girl—she is a fair one—"

"With blue eyes, light hair, and a good complexion?" interrupted Tony, vivaciously.

"Yes, as is usual, with very fair women."

"*Very* fair, you say?" again interrupting her waning, waning lover,—bewitched with the no-

velty of the contrast between his late mistress and his future one.

"Yes, Tony Skelton, *very* fair; as fair as heart can wish," answered Esther, now just beginning to apprehend.

"And only about nineteen, like yourself," cried Tony, not noticing Esther's expressive manner, in the anticipating joy of his simple heart; "and a bounding, bouncing, charming girl, I'll warrant; all smiles and laughter, and pleasant conversation! Yes, I remember you hinted as much to me before; didn't you, Esther?"

There is no use in continuing the scene between the lovers, on this occasion; Tony arrived at home to rave as much about Esther's cousin, as he had done about Esther's self before her arrival at Upper Court. Esther locked herself up in her chamber to hate the merry-hearted Mary, whom she had loved, during their first acquaintance in Dublin, on her way from England, to her father's house, and ever since, till

this evening; and, even towards her *beau-idéal* of lover, and of constant lover, Tony Skelton, her heart began to change, and change badly. Unamiable ingredients had naturally mixed themselves up with the whole of Esther's character; and the course of her education and experience had not since worked them out of it. As a child, she was self-willed, almost daring in the attainment of whatever she had set her heart on, and resentful, if thwarted in gaining her object. Nay, worse, she could brood over her disappointment, and unrelentingly nurse a spirit of retaliation towards its author. Judicious direction of her mind and feelings might doubtless, have done much towards subduing, if not eradicating these infirmities, during her growth from child into girl; or the really good portions of her mind and heart, their generosity, and even romance, might have been cultivated and enlarged, so as to weigh down their dangerous tendencies. Such, we repeat, had not however been the case; and now, at nineteen,

she was therefore, a passive victim to the unamiable temptations of her nature; at the impulse, too, of the greatest disappointment any woman can feel, and which Esther Neville felt to an intensity of which few women are capable. In fact, before the summer morning's sun danced dazzlingly through the window, on her sleepless eyes, Esther had vowed a vengeance upon the unconscious Tony Skelton, for his buoyant spirits, the previous evening; nay, she had planned it, and only waited to receive full proof of his delinquency, with a fit opportunity, in order to carry it into execution.

And Tony did not keep her long waiting. He was in Mr. Neville's house when Mary O'Neil entered it, and scarce stirred from her side the whole evening. Esther had to suffer the scene of a laughing, witty, hilarious flirtation between her cousin and her quondam lover, while she sat neglected, looking out through the old bow-window of the sombre drawing-room. She did suffer it, however, silently, and

to all appearance, contentedly ; and, at length, she left them alone,—to reconnoitre, however, from an adjacent room ; at the door of which she had not stood a long while, till her ears heard the words of perfidy from Tony's importunate lips, and then something else from them, with the aid of those of the laughing, almost scoffing Mary O'Neil, which sounded to Esther like a poisonous reptile's hiss.

And now she took her measures, her first ones, at least. She wrote to Mary's brother, a brave and cool, though fierce, old campaigner, quartered with his regiment in a town near at hand. She sought her father, in his library, and conversed with him some time. Then she had to adapt her manner and looks to her purposes, before re-entering the drawing room, where the new lovers still sat in the twilight. "Does she laugh at him still?" thought Esther, again eaves-dropping at the door. "No—*now* her voice is gentle enough, and if she *does* continue to reject his quickly conceived, and as

quickly told love, it is in maiden murmurs only. Good! very good!—Mary O'Neil, he shall be mine yet—mine, though it were but to show him him how I loathe him, when he *is* so!" And, so meditating, Esther tripped into the room, in seemingly high spirits, rallying the happy pair, and congratulating herself on having been the means of making them known to each other. Mary laughed, and protested, and and remonstrated, and asked, "How could such nonsense enter into her dear Esther's head?" And Master Tony, what did he say or do? Was there no appearance of disconcertion in his manner? no consciousness of being, at the least, a very gay deceiver? no awkwardness in the presence of the woman to whom, a few hours before, he had been swearing, in good round oaths, (as became his rank and bearing in those good old times,) adoration and fidelity? Not a trace of anything like all this: and for a very sufficient reason—namely, because he did not feel it. His heart accused him of nothing at

all. He stood quite self-acquitted to his own conscience, or rather he had never been at its bar for an instant. He was but following his nature, his vocation. In a word, the matter did not, could not, trouble his mind, had never done so, and was very unlikely ever to do so. And hence, upon Esther's re-reappearance, he only joined in Mary O'Neil's laugh, and chuckled, and rubbed the palms of his hands together, and really and truly thought it all exceedingly pleasant and natural, and just as it ought to be.

About three evenings after, Tony and Mary O'Neil were seated in a very nice little place, out of doors. It was a miniature, a fairy valley, abruptly entered, at one point, very near to that where they had chosen to repose themselves after their walk, by a zig-zag path down one of its sides—the side, too, opposite to where they sat. A little wailing brook—so little that it fretted itself in wailing against the mere pebbles which obstructed the would-be perfectly even

course of its insignificant existence—was at their feet; their couch was one of the inland sweeps of its mossy, and daisied, and buttercupped bank; and the sky-lark was bravuraing his last evening song for his wife, over their heads. Could there be a better boudoir for two lovers? *They* thought not.

"But can I believe you?" murmured Mary, as Tony's doomed head rested on her shoulder, "this time, your first time?"

"I vow and swear it, dearest, dearest darling. by the round world, and the blue sky over it! —by your two eyes! — and by this — and this—."

"Stop, stop!" whispered Mary, "there's some one looking at you."

Tony followed her glance with his own. On the top line of the sweeping ground opposite to them stood three figures. Esther Neville, leaning her right arm on her father's, and her left on a dragoon officer of about forty. "My brother Peter!" half shrieked Mary, starting up.

The new comers stood a moment observantly, during which Esther, turning her face alternately from one to another of her supporters, pointed expressively towards the lovers. "What do they want here?" asked Tony, rising. Esther, her father, and Captain O'Neil, descended the zig-zag path to the brook, crossed the tiny stream by stepping-stones, and were soon with their friends.

"Hope you're well, Miss Mary O'Neil, since I saw you last," said the *militaire*. Mary could only run to him, and embrace him.

"Good evening, Mr. Tony Skelton," began Esther.

"A kind good evening, Esther," answered Tony, "though I thought we wished each other that before."

"I want to make you acquainted with Miss O'Neil's brother, Captain O'Neil," continued Esther.

"Thank you kindly!" responded Tony.

"My service to you, sir," said the captain,

bowing low, while the broad skirts of his braided buff coat stuck out at either side.

"And mine to you, captain," answered Tony, quite cheerfully.

"I may as well make you a little better known to one another, gentlemen," resumed Esther, haughtily taking her father's arm, while her bridled passion made her brown cheeks pallid, and her slight lips ashy-coloured. "This, Mr. Antony Skelton, is a brave and distinguished officer, who, as yet, cannot count a stain on the honour of one member of his family, male or female, and who is determined he never shall. And this, Captain O'Neil, is the young gentleman who has been trifling with the affections of two of your relations in the short space of a few weeks; the presumptuous beggar, who began by swearing himself *my* admirer, and who prevailed on me to conceal the dishonour from you, dearest father; and who, the very hour Mary O'Neil came to see me, repeated the same oaths to her- (Mary shrieked out at these

words)—and repeated them, again and again, until at last she allowed him the degree of intimacy we have witnessed from the top of that height yonder."

"A peculiar kind of business, Mr. Antony Skelton," remarked the grave and gruff captain.

"I protest—I declare, captain, I don't know, I can't see what all this means," said Tony.

"Then we must only try and clear your eyesight, sir. *You* wish to have nothing to say further in the matter, cousin Esther?"

"Me!" repeated Esther, scoffingly, "I scorn the poor adventurer as I do the dust of the road I have come to find him for you."

"Very well," rejoined the captain, "you need be in no passion, my dear; I only asked you to declare your mind to his face—just to give him a hint that, although my own sister is second in the case, I should have seen you righted before her, if such was your will, taking into account that *you* were first in the case.

Very well. And so, Mr. Antony, 'tis with Miss O'Neil's help you are carrying on the war at present?"

"Sir? what do you say, captain?" asked Tony.

"That is, in plain words, you are very much devoted to my sister."

"Devoted! I adore her on the knees of my heart! and have told her as much a thousand times!" assented Tony, joyously.

"Very well, sir. You do my sister and me a great honour."

"Delighted to hear you say so!" cried Tony, pouncing on his hand, and shaking it.

"Very well, Mr. Antony. All very well, so far; and of course you agree that, particularly after your meeting here this evening, which any one might have witnessed before your friends came up, the sooner such matters are brought to an end, the better for all parties concerned."

"I—I must really say," stammered Tony, "that I should be very, very sorry to bring

things to an end so soon between me and my darling Mary ——." His heart merely failed him at the thought of *giving her up* so exceedingly soon; "but if you afford me a little more time, and let me look about me a little, perhaps I may soon be able to oblige you."

"I can spare but very little time, sir," replied the captain, misconceiving him, yet, even on his own understanding, looking dangerous. "My leave of absence extends but to three days."

"Well, captain, well, even in three days a good many things may happen."

"But the business ought to be completed, sir, before I go back to my regiment."

"Well, and perhaps it may—who knows?" assented Tony cheerfully, and with self-reliance.

"Come, come, sir—I don't understand you at all, nor your foolish manner either. In one word, Mr. Antony Skelton, are you prepared to marry Miss O'Neil this evening, under Mr. Neville's roof?"

"Marry!"—— ejaculated Tony, in mortal surprise. But he was soon made more familiar with the new-formed idea, on having the captain's alternative suggested to him. Not, indeed, that he was as much a coward as he was a half-witted country gentleman. Had he disliked Mary, it is probable he would have stood and fired his four or five shots for a chance of escaping her; but, on the contrary, his passion for her still remained as strong as any he had ever felt for any other woman, chiefly, perhaps, because as yet she had not quite fully avowed her adoration of himself, and he wanted that habitual gratification, at any risk. In short, with the nature or extent of his new engagement only very vaguely established in his mind, and while poor Mary, notwithstanding a growing preference, objected on the score of Tony's perfidy to her cousin, as well as on account of the rapidity of the proceeding, married they were that evening, in Mr. Neville's house, — her brother emphatically bullying her into com-

pliance by threats of a foreign convent. It should before now have been said that Mary O'Neil was an orphan, her father and her mother both dead, and therefore that she stood greatly in awe of a brother so much her elder.

"I wish you joy, Mary Skelton," whispered Esther, directly the marriage ceremony had been performed. Mary half started at the emphasis with which her cousin spoke; it seemed to hide a dangerous meaning. Then she began to wonder at Esther's zeal in so precipitately providing her with a husband, in the person of the very man whom, but a few days before, she had permitted to pay attentions to herself. And the reader's surprise may also be aroused on this point, recollecting Esther's mental resolve, while meanly eaves-dropping at the drawing-room door. Marrying Tony to another woman seemed, indeed, a strange step towards making him her own property. But we shall hear her explain the crooked and

unique workings of her imperfected mind and unrefined heart.

How Tony was to support a wife, now that he had got one, together with some other little human beings who might follow the event, to say nothing of himself, dogs, horses, cocks, ferrets, and two or three servants, at least, to look after his whole menage; this was a question which occupied his brother-in-law the captain, his host, Mr. Neville, and, (in a very slight degree) himself, to a late hour the night of his marriage.

"As for me," said Tony, laughing gaily, "every body knows that, since my last Dublin trip, I have been living on Divine Providence, like my friends the archbishops."

"Your brother may assist you," observed Mr. Neville.

"Roger has not a sod that isn't mortgaged twice over," answered Tony, "and I believe I helped him, the first time, my own self," he added, again

laughing—not a false, forced laugh, but a sincere hearty one.

"I live on my pay alone," said Captain O'Neil, "having been a little improvident, like yourself, brother Tony, in my younger days, with the wreck of the paternal property which my dear father's tastes, as a country gentleman, properly supporting the family consequence, left me to take care of. Your wife's little fortune remains untouched, however; and, with it, suppose we purchase and stock a snug farm for you? Care and prudence might soon make you and Mary rich, and cut out something for the little ones; and 'tis no disgrace to a gentleman to farm his own lands."

"Done!" cried Tony, striking the table with his knuckles. "Disgrace! not a bit; 'tis a most honourable occupation,—and that's the worst can be said of it. And as to care and prudence between my darling Mary and me, now that we are to be turned out on our own

accounts; never fear, Captain; never fear, Mr. Neville. So good night,—and here's our own noble healths. Good night—hurra!" And, bounding like a stag over the backs of chairs which stood in his way, Tony sallied forth.

Two days after, the new-married couple, accompanied by the Captain, left Mr. Neville's house to take possession of their own. Esther Neville did not appear to wish them good-bye,—her father said she was indisposed. Nor had she appeared to them since the moment after their marriage, when she wished Mary joy in rather a remarkable manner. And her father all along gave the same account of her absence; but it was not the true one. Esther did not stay in the house ten minutes after leaving the drawing-room that evening. Ordering her carriage, she departed in it for the abode of a lady, a relation, in the neighbourhood; and home she did not return till Tony Skelton and his wife had quitted her father's house.

Let us skip over about a year-and-a-half, and visit farmer Tony in his own house, just to see what "care and prudence" had done for him in the mean time. He and Mary are sitting to a good turf fire, facing each other; and that's one feature of comfort, certainly. Tony has a huge jug of strong beer before him,—and that's another. But he is ill-dressed, and so is poor Mary; and he looks five years older than when we last saw him, and not so handsome, to say nothing of respectable; and she looks delicate, and worn, and drooping; in fact, she is but lately risen from her lying-in bed. Glance round the room. Fowling-pieces, fishing-rods, nets, and other weapons and implements of field sport, irregularly placed over the chimney, hint that Tony is yet able, or recently has been, to follow some of his old pastimes; nay, a fox-hound rolled up before the fire, and a fresh brush stuck into the muzzle of a fowling-piece, proclaim that, if his hunter is not yet in the stable, he very lately

might have been found there. But what shall we say of the torn, and worn, and crumpled carpet on the floor? and of the ricketty, almost shivered deal table before him; and of the one mean, thin, gauky tallow-candle which flickers on it? and of the broken chairs, and the damp white mould which in many places covers the paper on the walls of Tony's parlour?

A few words of the conversation between him and his wife may assist us to answer:—"Never mind, Mary duck; keep never minding, and all will go right in the long run; and if you would just stop talking to me, in that way, about this woman and that woman, and this girl and that girl, you would leave me more heart to look about me, and keep things together.

"Very well, dear Tony, very well; only I'm told you had a gay time of it while I was up stairs, the last three weeks. But no matter. What we are now to do for common food,

or even to keep the old leaky house over our heads—that's the question."

"Well, and so it is, darling," assented Tony.

"You take it very quietly, Tony dear."

"And to be sure I do, Mary pet."

"But what do you mean to do? There is not a shilling left of the thirteen hundred spared out of my little fortune, after purchasing the farm, to help us on—is there?"

"Not a stiver, my love."

"And our stock is driven, almost to the last cow, for debts incurred in the meantime?"

"You speak the blessed truth, duck."

"And we owe more than they have sold for."

"Indeed and we do, sure enough."

"And no one will give us a loaf on credit any longer."

"So they say, darling."

"Then where are we to get the loaf?"

"Buy it—out of that, my dear:" and, to

Mary's astonishment, Tony emptied a goodly-sized leathern bag of guineas on the table.

"In the name of goodness, Tony, how have you come by that?"

"Esther Neville's attorney gave it to me."

"Esther Neville's attorney," repeated Mary, in consternation.

"Yes, love. You know since the old man's death she has all his great riches at her own disposal."

"Yes. Well, she lends it to you?"

"No such thing; but, as I was talking of mortgaging our little purchase, she heard of it, and so sent the attorney to me, and the business was soon settled."

"Soon, indeed," replied Mary. Then she added to herself: "Well might you wish me joy, Esther;" and dismal and fearful, though vague forebodings pressed on Mary's mind.

"How soon must you repay Esther Neville, Tony?" she resumed, after a pause, during which her tranquil husband was whistling a hunting-air,

and playing with the heap of gold on the table.

"Esther offered me my own time, darling; so, to make sure, I named this day twelve-months; and there's what the little attorney called a special deed of agreement between us, that the land and house are Esther's if we are not quite punctual. But little fear of that: 'care and prudence' will enable us to meet the debt in six months, not to talk of twelve."

A comely serving-wench here bustled into the parlour, much agitated, and bawled out "Misther Antony, there's Kitty Larissy, the smith's daughter, from the other side o' the river, is afther sendin' in a little brat of a *gorsoon*, to ax you to step out to spake to her. I wondher what makes her ashamed or afeard to come up to our dour her own-self, instid o' snakin' about the house in that way."

"Divvle's in the little fool, what can she

want of me?" demanded Tony, bundling out of the room with a very bad grace.

"You're the best judge o' that, yourself, sir," answered the serving-wench, stumping after him in evident dudgeon,—and dudgeon of that peculiar kind which might have had its source in outraged though tender feelings.

"Twelve months are soon passed over;" and again we approach Tony's house upon the day appointed for the re-payment of Esther's loan to him.

Something unusual occurs within. The road, as we come near, is covered with country-people; groups of them also recline on shelving ground over it; and all are grave, and converse in whispers. Looking to the humble mansion, we see its window-shutters closed. Entering its little court-yard, Sir Roger Skelton's old lumbering carriage appears at the door, with, behind it, those of some of the neighbouring gentry, and Sir Roger's servants

wear long white hatbands and scarfs. Immediately before the door two chairs confront each other at some distance; and at either side of it stand two mutes in black cloaks, holding long black poles in their hands, surmounted by folds of white linen. Death is in the house! The country people have flocked in to attend the funeral—a duty considered almost sacred among them—and to vie with each other in bearing the coffin on their shoulders to the church-yard. And now they know they have not to wait long; for the two chairs have just been placed before the door to receive the coffin, a few moments, while the clergyman prays over it before it is lifted up and borne to its destination.

The pause, though short, is awful. The country-people crowd up to the house, scarce uttering a breath. Hush! hark! that wild low wailing of women within the house announces the closing of the coffin-lid. Do not the hoarse moans of men mingle with it? Again hush!

The corpse is brought out. Two clergymen, an old and a young man, issue through the door bareheaded, and murmuring prayers; white scarfs across their shoulders, and white flowing bands on their hats. Then, carried upon men's arms, who confront each other, appears the coffin—poor Tony Skelton and his brother following it as chief mourners, their eyes reddened and cast down, and their lower features hid in the collars of their black cloaks; other mourners, friends and neighbours, also appear in black cloaks, and, for the present, the procession is ended by women in close white mantles, with hoods gathered round their faces, whose wild lament now swells higher and higher on the ear, and is answered, suddenly, by the ejaculations and cries of the hitherto hushed crowd before the house. The coffin rests awhile upon the chairs; every head is uncovered, and every knee bent, while the clergymen pray over it. Then four strong men place it on their shoulders; the clergy-

men still precede it; the widower and his brother still follow it; Sir Roger's carriage and servants come after; then the friends and their carriages; then the women in white,—and all pass through the country-people, abroad, who form irregularly in their train, to the amount of perhaps a thousand souls, men, women, and children; and in this order the procession moves on, near the bank of a shining placid river and through the windings and inequalities of a road running almost by chance between sweeping hills at either hand; the continued wail of the women echoing from height to height, and along the surface of the water.

It was late of a December day when the funeral left the house. But the church-yard could soon be gained; it was not a quarter of a mile distant. Before arriving at it, however, the weather suddenly changed, as if to try the sincerity of the multitude of voluntary mourners. Hail, rain, sleet, and wind burst and blustered around them;—no creature of the assembly

turned back.—The coffin was carried to Sir Roger's family vault, the mouth of which, in the middle of the uninclosed church-yard, was always covered over by a little oblong building of brick and mortar, surmounted by a marble slab, except when a tenant approached it; and then the slab was removed, and one side of the oblong broken, to afford free passage for the descent of the corpse, down a few narrow stone steps. These circumstances it is advisable to mention; and notice is also invited to the closing events of the evening in the church-yard. The deluges of rain and sleet, and the roaring of the wind, increased rather than diminished at the moment, when, in the somewhat premature gloom of the hour, the coffin was being conveyed down the steps into the tomb. There was bustle, and confusion, and anxiety, and uncertainty. The steps were slippery from the sleet; the bearers of the sad burden missed their footing; they and it were precipitated into the depths of the vault: and

the results of the accident soon appeared to be some dislocation of their own limbs, and a giving way of the screws of the coffin-lid. For the men, help was at hand; for the other mishap, persons were to be sought after; the evening grew darker and blacker: the storm augmented its rage: and, at the advice of all friends present, Tony Skelton consented to return home, and wait until morning to have the coffin screwed down again, and the mouth of the vault re-built.

We now rapidly approach the close of our history. Sir Roger and the elder of the clergymen accompanied Tony to his house, to stay the night, and console him in his bereft situation. They found the doors closed; and this the servants, who had all gone with the funeral, pronounced strange, inasmuch as they had been left open, and, indeed, the house empty, after the departure of the body for the church-yard. Tony knocked; the door was opened by Esther Neville's attorney. The widower started and stared. The attorney drew him aside and said,

—Miss Neville, herself, sir, is in the parlour, and wishes to speak with you alone—quite alone. —I am not sure if her head is right; and what she exactly means to do I cannot guess; but she insists on seeing you without a witness."

Tony looked still more confounded for a moment; but a happy thought seemed to relieve him a little; he whispered to his brother and the clergyman what was going on, and stepped into the parlour.

Esther Neville was seated at the fire in the riding dress of the day. A solitary candle scarce gave light to the apartment. To Tony's great comfort she smiled when he appeared, and held out her hand to him—saying—I am glad to see you *in my house*, Tony Skelton."

"In *your* house, Esther?"

"Don't you remember what day of the month it is to-day?"

"Yes," muttered Tony; "and now I guess what you mean, Esther Neville."

"Perhaps you do not. Can you redeem your land and house?"

"No, not if one gold guinea could redeem them for me."

"Then they *are* mine, you know; and, as the weather is bad, I intend sleeping here to-night, with some servants, and my attorney. They will contrive a bed for *you*, at Upper Court, I suppose; or perhaps your friend the clergyman may oblige you."

"Thank you, Esther; I'll go and see."

"Stop a moment, dear Tony:" he started, and turned round; she was again smiling at him: "sit down, and let us have a little chat, something like old times." He did as he was bid; she drew her chair closer to him.

"Ah, those old times, Tony! when you vowed and swore you loved me dearly!"

"And I did, Esther!" gasped Tony, his happy suspicion before entering the parlour now growing into almost a reality. I did! as, truly as ever man loved woman!"

"'Twas for a short time, however. You soon gave me up for another."

"Ah, dear Esther, a foolish frolic; did not mean giving you up; and you were to blame, yourself, for separating us, really."

"And perhaps I was, dear Tony. But that can't be helped now, you know. Let us go on, instead of looking back. Whatever attracted you to me, a few years ago, is still in me; I am still a very young woman, not yet two-and-twenty."

"To be sure you are, my dear Esther! and improved, if possible, every way; and more worthy of true love than ever!"

Did Tony mean and feel what he said? He did. Esther again was a contrast to all other women he had adored since their angry parting; and—with the tomb unclosed over Mary O'Neil—and worse—her coffin unscrewed—he *did* mean and feel what he said.

They continued their conversation together for more than an hour. Esther's revenge over the paltry mind and heart of Tony Skelton lay within her grasp. She sent him to call in his

brother, the clergyman, and the attorney. She invited them to be seated, and spoke as follows —"Mr. Attorney—whatever I say, do not interrupt me. You have assured me there are no means of staying your proceedings against Mr. Tony Skelton, and that his house and lands must pass out of his possession, and he once more become a pauper. But I have found means. I do not scruple to say, gentlemen all, that he and I were once sincerely attached to each other, and that an old love is now renewed, and as truly as ever. That being the case, there can be nothing very extraordinary in our becoming man and wife, and, for his sake, as soon as possible. Should we delay a single day—a single evening and night, I mean—*I* must become the possessor of his only earthly property; and, sudden—and, perhaps, something else—as the resolution may appear, I have consented to marry him, this instant, to save him from the humiliation of offering himself to me as a mere beggar."

Tony winced at the tone of her address. It was a little unlike (though he could not exactly say how or where) her honied words to him, a few moments before. And so was the expression of her face, though he could not define that either.

Esther paused a moment, being interrupted by loud shouts and cries, seemingly of deadly terror, which passed by the house. They subsided, and she continued.

"Yes, Gentlemen, there he stands, Tony Skelton, my old lover; Tony Skelton, who partly out of a return of pure, disinterested affection for me, partly from a very natural desire of keeping a roof over his head, presses me——(there, again, thought Tony, why, 'twas *she* pressed *me!)* "to marry him this instant—in this house—the house of death—death's taint, and almost smell in it,—pah!——and while the late wife of his bosom is scarce yet cold in the grave! But these facts should only increase my love and gratitude, since they only show how

great is the ardour of his passion. Here I stand up, then, dear Tony; and when I *am* your wife, you and your friends shall hear a few more of my opinions about you."

They stood hand in hand before the clergyman; every one but Esther, even Tony, looking stunned and confused. She afterwards declared her plan of revenge;—to have married him, in order to prove to the world the base folly and littleness of his nature, which, under the circumstances she had herself enumerated, could permit him to accept any woman's hand, either for whim, or self-interest, or both;—and then Esther would have spurned him to her feet, drawn his own picture to his face, and cast him off for ever. But the sweet cup of revenge was fearfully snatched from her lips, even while they touched it.

All in the parlour were suddenly startled by a very low hoarse moaning at one of the windows, of which the shutters fastened inside. They listened, and feeble fingers seemed scratching at

the glass; and then the weak, inarticulate voice passed round to the back of the house, accompanied by a trailing noise. A moment after, shrieks and howls of utter terror arose in the kitchen, and Tim Ryan, Tony's man-of-all-work, clasped round the waist by a stout serving-wench before mentioned, broke into the parlour, as mad for the time as any two poor creatures in Bedlam. "*Thonomonduoul!*" began Tim, and *he* only was able to speak, or rather stutter, "God forgive us for cursin' !—bud—here it's afther us, hot-fut!"

His master and friends rapidly questioned him; he took little notice.

"And the duoul's in me, for a born fool, to run and open the back-door, to let it in! only that *you* heard it, Winny, and was afeard and made me go out to see——Murther!—don't ye all hear it!" The trailing noise remarked outside the house, was now more distinct, coming along the passage from the kitchen. "Murther! and do ye mane to stay

here!—Let me go, Winny; and help a hand to pull open this windee!" He began to unfasten the shutters,—"Oh, your reverence, won't you thry an' lay it, Sir!—Let me go, Winny, I tell you!"

But Winny did not let him go; and they emerged together through the now fully open window.

Almost at the same moment, Mary Skelton, clad in her grave-clothes rent and soiled, and with her hands and feet bleeding, dragged herself on her knees to the threshold of the parlour door; and there, after half raising herself to give one corpse-like look at the group within, fainted, and fell across it.

Our story is told. Esther Neville had only half her revenge; and in some time, when recovered from the terrors of that night, she tried to make amends for having ever wished to wreak any. She shared her fortune with Mary and Tony, who lived together, a tolerably happy couple, during more than twenty years after—thanks

to a false step and bad screws—the father and mother of sons and daughters—all as much alive all over their little bodies, as if their mamma had never been waked and buried beforehand,—all over their little bodies, except in their lower extremities,—a deficiency transmitted to them by Mary Skelton, who, in that respect, never was able wholly to rewarm herself out of the chill of the tomb, and who thus became the founder of "THE FAMILY OF THE COLD FEET."

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